

THE REAL
PALESTINE
OF TO-DAY



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LEWIS·GASTON·LEARY



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THE REAL
PALESTINE
OF TO-DAY



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Looking eastward over Jerusalem to the Russian view-tower on the Mount of Olives

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THE REAL PALESTINE OF TO-DAY

By

✓
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TO THE GIRL I LEFT BEHIND ME,
WHOSE LOYAL AFFECTION NEVER
WAVERED DURING ALL THE WAN-
DER YEARS

PREFACE

IN writing this little book, I have tried to do just one thing—to draw in rapid outline a *picture* of Palestine, as it appears to those who look long enough to appreciate something of the true values of a land which differs in so many respects from our own that a mere hurried glance is apt to see only those things which are strange and incongruous.

I have, therefore, kept out-of-doors as much as possible; for the most solemn and lasting memory of the Holy Land is not the incoherent jumble of doubtful shrines, but the beauty of the everlasting hills.

And because, in painting a landscape, each detail must have some definite position and coloring, it has seemed better not to go into the discussion of conflicting opinions, but, in every instance, without qualification or defense, to fit some one conclusion into its proper place in the picture. Ordinarily this has been the most commonly accepted belief. In a few cases I personally hold to a different opinion from that which is here quoted; but to have justified my own position would have necessitated close argument and cumbersome footnotes,

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and would have added nothing to the clearness or essential truthfulness of the picture.

Like the old Hebrew prophets and poets, I have not hesitated to go beyond the strict limits of the Land of Israel, whenever I could draw a better illustration for my theme from the land of Hermon and Lebanon.

The plans and outline maps were all made especially for this work, and it is hoped that they will aid to a clearer understanding of the text.

It may be of interest to add that the last chapter was the first in point of composition, and was really written under the circumstances there described.

Six of the chapters were recently published in serial form in *Travel*. Acknowledgments are also due to *The World To-day*, *Scribner's Magazine*, *The Christian Endeavor World*, *Forward*, and *The Christian Herald* for permission to include material which first appeared in these periodicals.

LEWIS GASTON LEARY

Pelham Manor, N. Y., October 1, 1911.

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The *Tezkereh*, or Turkish local passport, which the author used in Palestine



There are countless summits from which one can understand the whole lay of the land

The Real Palestine of To-day

I

TINY PALESTINE

NO matter how much you may read about Palestine, you will never quite realize how small it is, until some day you stand on the summit of one of its hundred mountains and see spread out before you in a single panorama practically all of the famous land which is "Holy" to Jew and Christian and Moslem. But before we climb the mountains, let us go to the roof of one of the hotels by the Jaffa Gate and look down on Jerusalem. You can recognize comparatively minute details of architecture in the farthest corner of the city, for the distance from the Jaffa Gate at the west to the Mosque of Omar at the east is only half a mile. The entire length of the city, from the Damascus Gate at the north to the Zion Gate at the south, is barely two-thirds of a mile, and, in spite of the fact that the streets are narrow, winding and crowded, you can walk from one end of Jerusalem to the other in eight or ten minutes.

Of late years the city has been spreading outside of the gates, especially to the northwest, where there are numerous colonies of American and European

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Jews, besides buildings belonging to various Catholic and Protestant missionary establishments; but the total population of Jerusalem is probably still under 100,000, and the area of the real, historic city within



If the Holy City were laid over lower New York, it would extend northward from the Battery hardly as far as Fulton Street

the ancient walls is only 210 acres, or less than a third of a square mile. That is, it is a little larger than the Elevated "Loop" district of Chicago. If the Holy City were laid over lower New York, it would extend northward from the Battery hardly as far as Fulton Street. For a still more startling com-

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parison, the whole walled city of Jerusalem is exactly, to an acre, *one quarter as big as Central Park*.

It is a little city, and it is a little country. From the same Jaffa Gate you can see the mountains of Moab, away beyond Jordan. The boundaries of the Holy Land have always been somewhat indefinite, however, and there is to-day no political unit corresponding to what we commonly mean by "Palestine."* Its *vilâyets* interlock on the north with the *vilâyets* of Syria, a district so closely allied to the Holy Land in climate and customs that we must frequently look thither for the best modern illustrations of Biblical history. Indeed, the two lands are often considered together under the common designation of Syria, and their present inhabitants are properly known as Syrians.

The region most closely identified with the sacred narratives may roughly be said to extend from the Mediterranean on the west to the Jordan Valley on the east, and from Mt. Hermon and the Leontes River on the north to the Arabian Desert on the south. This seems to have been the original "Promised Land" (see Numbers 34:6-12). The Hebrews occasionally controlled part of the country east of Jordan; but, on the other hand, they did not occupy the coastal plain. These boundaries include an area of

*Palestine proper includes the southern portions of the *vilâyets* of Damascus and Beirût, and the independent *mutesar-rifîyet* (sub-province) of Jerusalem.



Palestine west of the Jordan (6,000 square miles) is smaller than New Jersey (7,455 square miles), the outline of which is indicated. The arrows at center of map indicate limits of view from Ebal



There is no real harbor at Jaffa. Steamers must anchor some distance out, and passengers are landed by rowboats



The Jaffa Gate of Jerusalem, the busiest part of the Holy City

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about 6,000 square miles, which is somewhat smaller than that of the State of New Jersey. The entire length of the country, "from Dan to Beer-sheba," is about the distance from New York to Albany; and so narrow is Palestine that if Chicago were placed across it with one end at the Sea of Galilee, the other end of the city would be washed by the waters of the Mediterranean.

Let us imagine Jerusalem to be situated at the lower end of Central Park, which it would fill almost as far up as the lake. Then Bethlehem would be at Bowling Green, Hebron would lie among the central hills of Staten Island, and the Dead Sea would begin at Jamaica Bay. Going northward, we should find Bethel in Van Cortlandt Park, the city of Samaria at Haverstraw, Nazareth at Poughkeepsie, Mt. Hermon at the heart of the Catskills, and Damascus, the arch-enemy of Jerusalem, would lie just this side of Albany.*

There is no other country in the world whose geographical features can so easily be taken in by the naked eye. As has been said, Palestine is about the size of New Jersey. Now I was born in New Jersey and have traveled over almost the entire state; but I know of no spot from which one can get even an

*The reader understands that, while the above comparisons are exact so far as distances are concerned, the directions are only approximate. The Palestinian towns do not lie so nearly in a straight line as do the cities along the Hudson.

approximate idea of the general configuration and principal physical features of the State of New Jersey. In Palestine there are countless summits from which even the untrained observer can understand the whole lay of the land. As you ride up-country from Jerusalem, you are hardly ever out of sight of the Mediterranean on the left or the mountains "beyond Jordan" on the right; and often you can see both the western and the eastern boundaries at once. To a person who has wearily traced his way through other countries whose mountains and rivers and lakes did not appear at all as he expected them to, one of the most startling things about the Holy Land is that *it looks just like the map*.

Stand, for instance, on the rounded summit of Mt. Tabor. You are only 2,000 feet above the Plain of Esdraelon; but you can see the whole northern half of Palestine. To the west is Mt. Carmel, jutting into the blue Mediterranean like a huge, blunt cigar. To the east is the valley of the Jordan; and while the river itself is so low as to be out of sight, the mountains of Gilead beyond it are clearly visible. To the south is the flat Plain of Esdraelon, broken into by "Little Hermon," upon whose slopes lie tiny hamlets which still bear the familiar names of Endor, Nain and Shunem. Beyond Little Hermon is the hill of Jezreel, and still farther to the south are seen Mt. Gilboa and the highlands of Samaria. To the north is Nazareth, whose highest houses can be

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clearly seen, shining white against the dark hills of Galilee; and the saddle-shaped Horns of Hattîn; and the deep valley sloping down to where we know the Sea of Galilee lies, behind the intervening hills; while, back of the northern mountains, with its conical summit dominating all the landscape, great Hermon towers over 9,000 feet into the sky.

Or stand on Mt. Ebal, which rises 3,000 feet above the sea, just north of the city of Shechem; and you can see virtually all Palestine. You look westward over the rolling foothills to the coastal plain and the Mediterranean. To the east the long, level line of the mountains on the other side of the Jordan is broken only by the deep gorges of the Yarmuk and Jabbok rivers. To the south you can see over Mt. Gerizim and far across Samaria to the tower at Mizpeh in Judea, which is only five miles from Jerusalem. To the north the view reaches past the hills of Samaria to Mt. Carmel; over the hollow where lies the Plain of Esdraelon; and then up again beyond the mountains of Galilee, until the eye rests upon far-distant Hermon, still imperial in its grandeur, though it is now seventy-five miles away. With the exception of the desert wanderings and the journeys of St. Paul, nearly all Bible history is comprehended within the panorama from Ebal's summit.

It is a tiny country; yet in all our own enormous land, from the Great Lakes to the Gulf of Mexico, and from the Atlantic to the Pacific, you will not

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find a larger variety of scenery, climate and products than exists within the narrow confines of Palestine.

It is essentially a mountainous country. Plains, or even broad valleys, are the exception. It is quite impossible to arrive at an adequate understanding of the religion or politics or social customs or economic problems of Palestine, unless it is constantly borne in mind that from Beer-sheba to Dan, and then northward through Syria as far as Aleppo, there runs a backbone of rugged highlands, interspersed here and there with lofty mountain peaks. The Biblical writers were nearly all highlanders. In all the Holy Land to-day only two towns of any importance are situated in valleys; and these two, Shechem and Hebron, are in high, narrow valleys which run at right angles to the trend of the central range, and are therefore easy of defense. The altitude of Nazareth is over 1,000 feet; the city of Samaria lies 1,540 feet above the sea; and Jerusalem is at an elevation of 2,500 feet. The summit of Mt. Hermon is 9,380 feet above the surface of the Mediterranean. The lower end of the Jordan Valley by the Dead Sea is 1,292 feet *below* the Mediterranean—the lowest spot on the surface of the earth!

On account of this extraordinary range of altitude, there is no other country of like size which furnishes such a variety of food products. The vegetation of the Jordan Valley is tropical; that of the

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Mediterranean shores is sub-tropical; the trees on the mountain slopes are those of our temperate zone; while the summits of Hermon and Lebanon are almost entirely bare of vegetable life, and so cold that snow lies all the year round in the sheltered gorges.

At the end of one summer trip in the mountains of Syria, I slept under four blankets, breakfasted in my heaviest winter clothing, with a rug wrapped around me for added warmth, and that same evening I took dinner in a coast town where the thinnest of duck suits was none too cool. I once watched the thermometer at Jericho rise until it registered 135 degrees. A few days later I rode past a Lebanon snow-drift eighty feet high, and swam in a mountain stream whose temperature was only ten degrees above the freezing point. And all this was in the month of August!

So it is difficult to give a satisfactory answer to the frequent inquiry as to the climate of the Holy Land. Which climate? Palestine has all climates—from the climate of Egypt to the climate of Labrador.

But, taking an average locality among the central highlands, the winter is raw and showery, like a rather cold New England April. Now and then there will be a bright, clear day of warm, gorgeous splendor. But when it does rain, it rains furiously, with crashing thunder and vivid lightning. I once counted twenty-two flashes in a minute. Often there will be heavy hail—my window was once broken by it—and

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great winds which blow down the vines and tear the tiles off the roofs. It is not uncommon to see water-spouts at sea. Sometimes a dozen of them will be in sight at the same time, whirling and twisting between the storm clouds above and the angry waves beneath.

Down by the coast, it hardly ever freezes. Ice may be seen once in ten or fifteen years. Up at Jerusalem, however, snow storms are not infrequent, and the drifts have lain knee-deep by the Jaffa Gate. The usual painting of the Nativity clothes the bystanders far too lightly for a Judean December; for the traveler who visits Palestine in mid-winter finds that his heaviest overcoat is none too warm.

In the summer time the temperature is high (76 degrees is the average for a Jerusalem August), and it stays high month after month, which is very wearing on the nerves. But there are seldom any such terrific hot spells as occur every year in New York and Chicago. In mid-summer I have ridden through Judea ten and twelve hours a day without suffering anything worse than the natural discomfort from perspiration and dust. The direct rays of the sun, however, are almost inconceivably hot, and it is dangerous to neglect to protect properly the head and neck. On the other hand, "the shadow of a great rock" will be from thirty to fifty degrees cooler than the sunshine's glare, not ten feet away. The houses are built with thick stone walls and high ceilings and

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shaded windows, so that indoors the temperature seldom rises above eighty or eighty-five degrees. Even during a sirocco—the occasional dry desert wind which is the one real discomfort of the Syrian summer—I never remember that my own room was as hot as ninety degrees, and the dark, stone churches and monasteries are apt to be dangerously cold and damp.

The hottest part of the day is just after sunrise, during the lull while the wind is shifting; but soon a refreshing breeze springs up from the Mediterranean and tempers the summer heat. At Jerusalem it is apt to be cool after dark at any time of the year. Even in August, the ladies used to carry wraps with them, when we went up to the roof for an after-dinner chat. One of the party, who neglected to put on an extra garment, caught a severe cold. My own teeth have never since chattered as they did one summer morning on the Mount of Olives, while I sat to the leeward of a protecting rock, watching for the sunrise, and shivering in the piercing wind. All in all, I have suffered more from the heat in New York City than I ever did in Palestine.

The best time of the year for visiting the Holy Land is during the months of March and April, just after the rains have stopped, while the wild flowers are most gorgeous and the dust is laid and the air washed clean and the climate like that of our own June. But for those who cannot take a vacation except in the summer, there is no reason why a trip

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to Palestine cannot be made in July or August with absolute safety and with a fair degree of comfort. Of course, one must exercise good judgment and common sense—qualities which some visitors to the Holy Land apparently leave at home. If you will go out in the sun bare-headed, or persist in getting overtired by walking when you could just as well ride, or make your diet of cucumbers and Oriental sweetmeats, it will not be the fault of the climate if you fall sick. But with the exercise of a few simple precautions, such as are necessary at first when visiting any new country, there will be less danger to health than at the average American seaside resort.

Of other dangers, there are none at any season; that is, none along the route of the ordinary tourist. West of the Jordan, the traveler is as safe as he is east of the Mississippi; and his "roughing it" consists in riding a very quiet, sure-footed horse during the trip up-country, halting for tea in the middle of the afternoon, eating a five-course dinner at night, and being served by the corps of well-trained servants which is provided by every competent dragoman and tourist-agency. As I lived in the country and spoke Arabic, I never employed a dragoman and perhaps I did rough it a bit, off the beaten track; but even so, I never thought of carrying any deadlier weapon than a small switch for the horse. The chief peril for the daring Palestinian explorer is a midnight attack by a band of predatory—fleas!

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If you make your first trip to Palestine during the hot season, it might be wise to omit the more fatiguing horseback rides, such as that from Nazareth to Damascus. But you can go by train from Jaffa to Jerusalem, and thence by carriage to Bethany, Bethlehem and Hebron, all of which are as high as many a Catskill hotel. Then, returning to Jaffa, it is only a night trip by sea to Haifa and Mt. Carmel, and an easy jaunt by railway and carriage to Mt. Tabor, Nazareth, Cana and the Sea of Galilee. A second night on the steamer brings you from Haifa to Beirût, which is the terminus of a railway to Damascus and Ba'albek and the cool summer resorts on the western slopes of the Lebanon range.

Everywhere on such a trip you will find comfortable hotels and English-speaking guides. You will cross the Mediterranean when its waters are the calmest; the steamers and railways will not be overcrowded; hotels will give better accommodations and lower rates than during the busy season; guides and shop-keepers will be more anxious to please; and the points of interest can be visited in a quiet, leisurely way, without the hurry and jostling and excitement of the spring months, when all Palestine, and especially Jerusalem, is seething with noisy, unkempt pilgrims and tired, nervous tourists.

For two persons traveling together, such a summer month in Palestine and Syria, beginning at Jaffa and ending at Beirût, ought not to cost over \$150

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apiece, including comfortable lodgings and occasional carriage hire and the services of a guide when necessary. If the travelers had a smattering of Arabic and were willing to sleep in native *khans*, the trip might be made for half that sum.

I hope that the ship of your imagination is already riding at anchor in the harbor of Jaffa. There really is not any harbor, and you will have to go ashore in small rowboats which roll perilously as they thread their way between the jagged rocks by the landing; but this will only add further zest to your first experience in Palestine.

It was in this little bay that gallant Perseus slew the dragon and freed the enchained Andromeda. Later on, Perseus moved eighty miles north to Beirût and changed his name to St. George. On one of the roofs of Jaffa, while Peter was waiting anxiously for dinner, he had that vision which was to exercise such a mighty influence upon the history of Christian missions. The priests have recently changed the location of the house of Simon the Tanner, and have put it nearer to the custom house, so that travelers will have no excuse for passing it by. Back of the crowded streets of the seaport are the far-famed orange groves of Jaffa and the gently rolling Plain of Sharon, where still bloom the Rose of Sharon and the Lily of the Valley, or, as we should call them, the narcissus and the blue iris. And off at the eastern horizon are the

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dim foothills of Judea and the beginning of that great, little country, which is so varied in its scenery, so strange in its language, so heterogeneous in its population, so contradictory in its spiritual aspects and, above all, so different from the country from which you have come, that you will have to travel far and observe closely and ponder deeply before you will be able to sympathize at all with the old patriot-poets who called this "the Glory of all Lands."

Welcome, then, to Palestine! In the words of the Syrian mountaineer, *Marhabah!* To which greeting you must answer, "A double welcome"—

Marhabtain!

II.

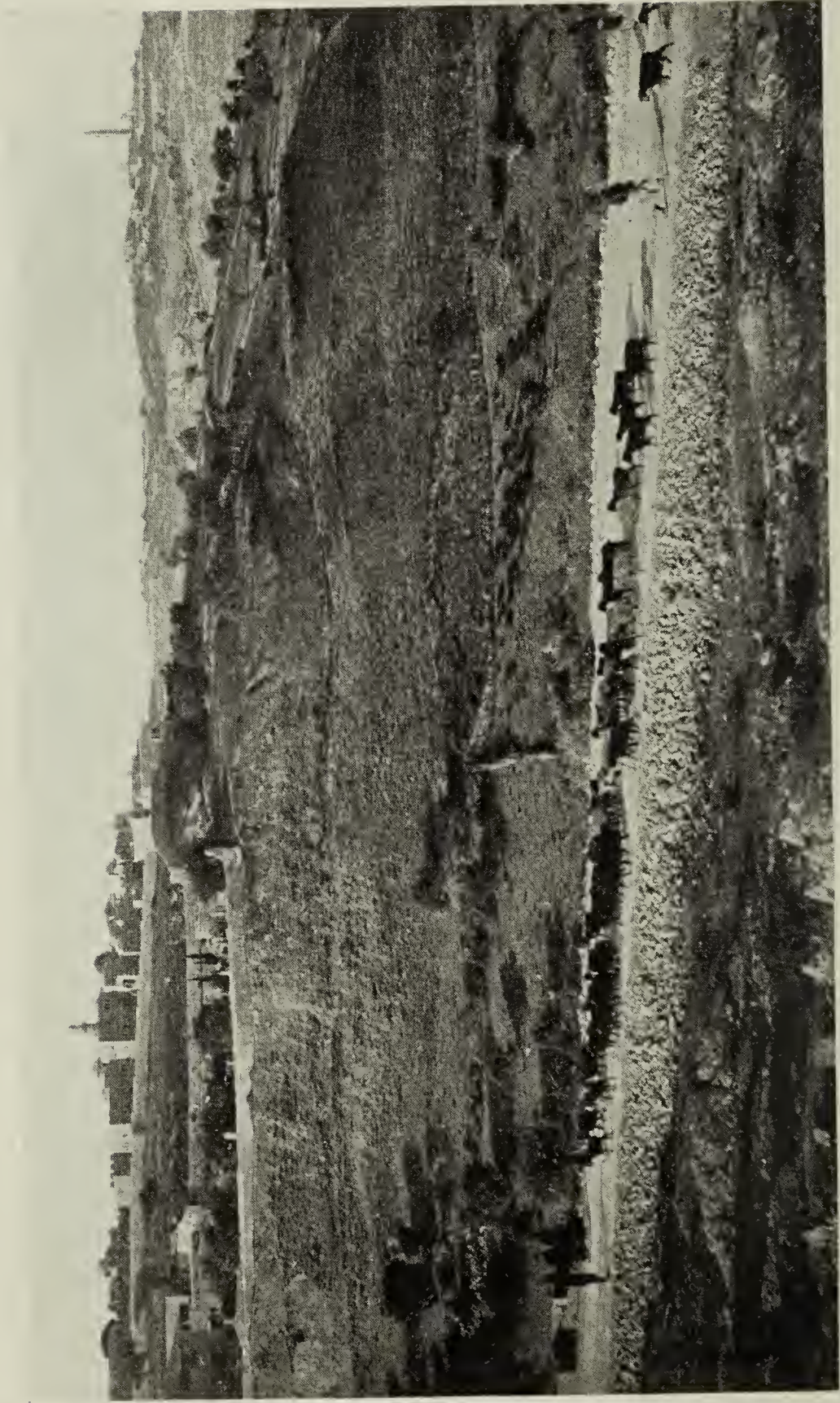
THE GREAT SOUTH ROAD

DURING one of my visits to Jerusalem, I lived for a month in a room directly opposite the Jaffa Gate. As a consequence, of all the sights I have seen on my travels, none is more indelibly fixed in my memory than the incessant, kaleidoscopic movement of the motley crowd through the busiest entrance to the Holy City, and then, beyond the gate, the curving line of the long white road which winds up over the southern hills toward Bethlehem and Hebron and the far-off Arabian Desert.

Strangely enough, the most vivid word-painting of the throngs by the Jaffa gate is the classic passage in "Ben Hur," which was written before General Lew Wallace ever went to Palestine. You need change very few details in that description of the heterogeneous multitude of the first century to make it an exact picture of the twentieth century scene. Here are Jews and Moslems and Druses, and Christians of every sect; Armenian bankers and Abyssinian monks and American schoolma'ams; Jewish rabbis and Moham-



“Maskeni! Maskeni!” Lepers of Jerusalem



The Hebron road passing the southern end of Jerusalem

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medan sheikhs ; Greek merchants and German doctors ; Levantine peddlers and English globe-trotters ; dark desert Arabs and pallid French nuns ; Russian pilgrims and Syrian dragomans ; black-robed Jesuits and white-robed Dominicans and brown-robed Franciscans ; descendants of the Prophet in green turbans, and Turkish soldiers in red fezes without tassels, and Eastern priests in tall stove-pipe hats without brims, and Protestant missionaries in pith sun-helmets ; an inextricable jumble of multi-colored garments and discordant languages and inimical races and rival religions passing in and out, all day long, through the famous portal of the ancient city.

Among the crowd—though always outside of the gate, for they are not allowed within the city—you see one or two little groups of lepers, stricken with that most terrible of diseases ; mysterious, revolting, incurable ; which eats away the body while the soul still lives. The bones of the face are usually attacked comparatively early in the progress of the malady, and the bridge of the nose falls in, which makes the lepers resemble horrible Mongolians. The vocal cords are affected and the throat muscles paralyzed, so that the voice sinks to a hoarse, sepulchral whisper. The fingers swell up and drop off at the joints ; then the hands and feet are lost. Yet at least one form of the disease (for there are several) is accompanied by anæsthesia rather than by acute suffering ; and often it is a very long time before death comes. I

talked with two men who had suffered with leprosy for twenty-five years, and with a third who, according to the testimony of a European physician, had been a leper for thirty-one years.

It is far from certain that the modern disease is the same as the "leprosy" of the Old Testament, which seems, from the sanitary regulations of the Pentateuch, to have been a whitish, scaly affection of the skin, which did not necessarily incapacitate the sufferer from pursuing his ordinary occupations, and from which eventually he might completely recover. Possibly, however, the Hebrew word embraced all diseases which were accompanied by external disfigurement, including what is now known as leprosy.

There are not many lepers in modern Palestine—less than a hundred in Jerusalem; half of them living in huts provided by the government near the village of Siloam, south of the Mount of Olives, and the other half in the Moravian hospital a mile southwest of the city. In the entire country there may be a few hundred lepers. The doctors in Palestine do not consider that the disease is contagious. It is still one of the mysteries of medical science; but it seems to result from unhealthful environment and wrong diet and, possibly, heredity, rather than from accidental contact with those who are diseased. The Moravian physician told me that he allowed his family to live with him at the leper hospital, under the same roof with forty patients, few of whom were

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confined to their rooms. Some of our American state health boards have recently become quite unnecessarily panic-stricken—not to say barbarously cruel—over the discovery of an isolated case within their jurisdiction.

Yet leprosy is a loathsome thing—unspeakably so—and it is not pleasant to have the lepers hobble alongside the carriage, and try to attract your attention by putting their swollen hands upon your coat sleeve: They do not cry “unclean” as in ancient times; but even those who are too weak to stand, sit in little circles outside the city gates and hold up their poor, shapeless hands to the passers-by, and cry *Maskeen! Maskeen!* “I am miserable! miserable!” And, alas, they are.

Beyond the shadow of the gate, we come out into the full glare of the Judean sunshine, where the dusty highway stretches dazzlingly before us. It is a good road, and it will take us hardly an hour to reach Bethlehem, five miles away. At our left rise the stern, gray walls of the Holy City, which in places are forty feet in height, and are further strengthened by thirty-four projecting towers. The present ramparts were erected by the Sultan Suleiman in the year 1542; but materials from the ruins of earlier walls were freely used in the rebuilding, and in places the foundations date back to the Jewish days. Close by the Jaffa Gate the fortifications are dominated by the massive citadel, which is the only fortress in

modern Jerusalem, and is commonly known as the "Castle of David."

After we pass the citadel, the road descends very rapidly, and as we look up the steep, bare slope, crowned by the fortifications which rise so high above us that nothing is visible beyond them save a nearby minaret or the roof of a house built against the wall, we realize, as never before, how the little mountain city has been able again and again to hold out stubbornly against vastly superior besieging forces. Indeed, from this western side, Jerusalem has never been taken by assault.

At the other edge of the road, on our right, is the *Birket es-Sultân*, or "Pool of the Sultan," one of the series of ancient reservoirs lying in the valleys which encircle Jerusalem. Within the whole city there is not and never has been a single well; and during the long, rainless summer, the inhabitants are still dependent for practically their entire water supply upon a few public reservoirs and countless private cisterns, which collect the winter rains. When these rains are insufficient, water is brought into the city on muleback from springs in the surrounding country. The last time I was in Jerusalem, water was being peddled in the streets.

The *Birket es-Sultân*, so called because it was repaired by the same Sultan Suleiman who rebuilt the fortifications, is the largest of the public reservoirs, being 550 feet long, 220 feet wide and 40 feet

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deep. It is believed by some to be the "Lower Pool" of Gihon, referred to in the Old Testament. The reservoir was very easily constructed by simply building two dams across the valley, which was then further broadened between the dams by removing the loose earth as far as the rock on either side. Like most public works under the Turkish government, the *Birket es-Sultân* has unfortunately been allowed to go to ruin. At the lower end of the excavation is a small pool of filthy, stagnant water; part of the other end is used as a market garden; and in the middle are held sales of cattle and grain, especially on Friday, which is the Moslem Sabbath.

On the broken rampart of the old reservoir sits a man whom we can instantly recognize as a native of Bethlehem, not only by the distinctive, bright-colored turban which he wears set far back on his high forehead, but also by his long, aquiline features; for although the inhabitants of modern Bethlehem are nearly all Christians, their peculiar type of face makes them look much more like the traditional Hebrew than do the real Jews of the Holy Land.

At the foot of the Sultan's Pool, the road to the railway station branches off to the right, past the olive groves of the Jewish colony which was established here by Sir Moses Montefiore. At our left the Valley of Hinnom sinks down around the southern end of Jerusalem, its steep sides still crowded with the innumerable graves and rock-hewn sepulchres and

dusty charnel houses which made the Hebrew name for the valley, "Gehenna," a synonym for hot, hopeless desolation. Straight in front of us the highroad rises to the top of the hill where, by the English Ophthalmic Hospital, we pause for a last near view of the Holy City. Then, turning forward again, we breathe the fresher air of the open country, and look upon pleasant panoramas of gently rolling hills, whose summits are covered with straggling olive orchards, and whose lower slopes are terraced for the cultivation of the mulberry, fig and grape. As we reach the end of each gradual ascent, there comes a broader outlook, especially to the left, where we can see beyond the farmland to the bare summits of the Judean Wilderness, and then off to the level line of the blue mountains beyond Jordan, which seem to march with us all the way.

There probably never was a time when there was not a road here, passing from north to south through the center of Judea. You can still see beside it the fallen Roman mile-stones. But it was already an ancient highway when the Romans repaired it. Herod's chariot passed along it, and the soldiers of Judas Maccabeus, and the knights of Tancred. Chronological order is baffled by the rapid succession of great events which are suggested at every step along the historic highroad. Here marched the mighty men of David, and the swift Saracen bands of Saladin, and the richly caparisoned camels of

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the Queen of Sheba, and the flocks of Abraham, and the brilliant court of Solomon's Egyptian queen, and the reverent pupils of St. Jerome; here passed the slow, heavily laden caravans from Arabia, in that dark, mysterious period before Hebrew history, when "the Canaanite dwelt in the land"; and here, one bleak December evening, there trudged wearily along an old man and his bride, who had come down all the way from Nazareth of Galilee, that their names might be enrolled in the tax-list at Bethlehem.

It is no wonder that the way is fairly cluttered with legends and fanciful localizations of historic incidents, ancient and modern, Moslem, Jewish and Christian. Few of them have even the slightest basis in fact, and these have seldom any stronger proof than the self-evident proposition that the event in question must have happened *somewhere*, and, if so, why not by this particular stone or under yonder tree? Many of the traditions show a child-like confusion concerning historical details, as where a certain bishop Elijah is identified with the prophet of that name, and the monastery which the good bishop built half-way between Jerusalem and Bethlehem is consequently revered as the scene of Elijah's vision under the juniper tree. Nevertheless it might be said for even the most extravagant and impossible of these tales that they do serve to vivify and perpetuate the memory of great events gone by. So to speak, these stories incarnate for the ignorant and simple-

minded peasants of Palestine, important moral and religious truths.

Concerning one spot by the roadside, tradition goes so far back that, even if it is wrong, the tradition itself is a part of history. For thousands of years this particular place has been revered as the grave of Rachel. "I buried her there on the way to Bethlehem," said the broken-hearted husband, Jacob. The Hebrew historian adds that her tombstone remains "unto this day"; and even to our own day the last resting-place of beautiful Rachel is shown about a mile outside of Bethlehem. No other sacred site in Palestine is attested by so continuous a line of historians and travelers. For many centuries the grave was marked only by a pyramid of stones. The present structure, with its white dome, is about four hundred years old. But there it stands "unto this day," revered by Christians, Jews and Moslems; and the wandering Arabs bring their dead to be buried in its holy shadow.

The road now forks twice. First a left-hand branch leads into Bethlehem. A little further on, another road goes off to the right to Beit Jâla, whose extensive olive orchards are seen on the other side of the valley. Again, however, we keep straight ahead on the central highway until, seven miles from Jerusalem, we reach the three famous reservoirs known as "Solomon's Pools."

Beside the highest reservoir, nearest the road, is



Solomon's Pools and the Kal'at el-Burak



One of the ancient wells of Beer-sheba

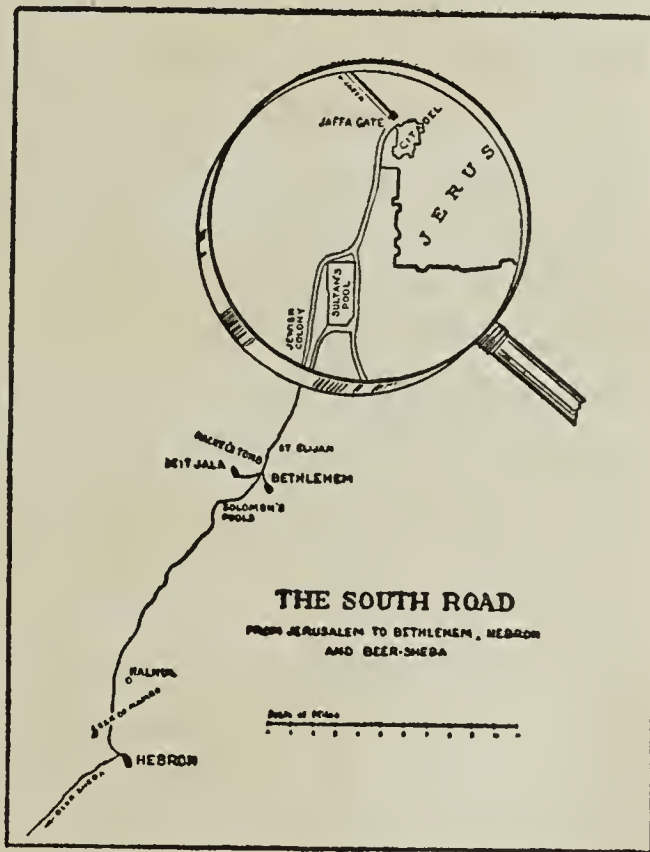
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the *Kal'at el-Burak*, or "Castle of the Pools," a large, square enclosure, guarded by tall stone walls, with castellated towers at the corners. It was evidently one of the fortified *khans* of the Middle Ages, placed here to protect the important road to the reservoirs against forays by nomadic robber bands.

The pools, which lie below the "castle" at the left of the road, are partly built-up of masonry, but chiefly excavated out of the solid rock-bed of the narrow, rapidly sloping ravine. For the supply of water they de-

pended upon the winter rains, several nearby springs, and a pipe which drew from the water-shed in the higher hills to the west.

The lowest and largest pool is about the size of the *Birket es-Sultân* by the Jaffa Gate; that is, its length is a little short of six hundred feet and its



greatest depth fifty feet. From it, a conduit takes an extremely circuitous course around the intervening hills to Bethlehem and Jerusalem. The last time I visited these pools, they were in a bad state of disrepair and almost dry; but they have recently been restored, and now again the ancient reservoirs send their precious water to the Holy City.

It is not known who originally constructed this extensive system of water-works. We know that they were repaired under Herod, but at that time the reservoirs were apparently very old. The statement in Ecclesiastes, "I made me pools of water," is a very slender justification for the belief that Solomon built these particular pools. But, at any rate, such is the popular tradition; and consequently many passages in Ecclesiastes and the Song of Songs which refer to pools and springs and gardens and orchards are localized in the adjacent valleys.

The road continues good all the way to Hebron, and we drive rapidly along the eastern slope of the central ridge, winding around the heads of ravines which drop away to our left. About twenty miles from Jerusalem we pass the village of Halhûl, under whose mosque is buried the prophet Jonah. At least, so say the Moslem villagers. But, as is fitting in the case of so famous a traveler, the grave of Jonah is pointed out in several widely separated localities, its ubiquity being rivalled only by that of the sepulchre of John the Baptist.

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A mile or so beyond Halhûl are the ruins of a strange structure known locally as the "Shrine of Abraham." The building must have been a massive and imposing one, for some of its stones are as much as sixteen feet in length; but just when or why it was erected is quite unknown. Nearby, however, are the remains of a church which we know was built 1,600 years ago by the Emperor Constantine; for we are now in the Abraham country, and this particular locality was believed by the Jews and early Christians to be the site of the Grove of Mamre, where the patriarch's tent was pitched and where he had those wonderful visions.

Present tradition, however, places Mamre a little farther on, and half a mile to the right of the main road. Here there is a Russian hospice, with vineyards which remind us that the famous grapes of Eshcol grew somewhere not far away, and an ancient tree which, since the sixteenth century at least, has been known as the "Oak of Mamre" or "Abraham's Oak." Its short, gnarled trunk is over thirty feet in circumference, its twisted limbs are almost entirely bare of leaves and so weak that they have to be propped up by heavy beams; while around the old oak is a stout iron fence, designed to keep goats and tourists from carrying off the whole tree piecemeal.

We are already at the edge of Hebron, with its venerable traditions, its tanneries and glass-works, its

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filth and fanaticism, and the fascinating mystery of its forbidden sepulchre. But the visit to this ancient city must be postponed until another chapter.

Here the modern carriage road ends; but the primitive highway leads on southward to the border of Palestine, where one can to this day see the water-pits which gave to the locality the name Beer-sheba, "Seven Wells." After 3,000 years, the wandering Bedouins continue to bring their sheep and goats to be watered at three or four of the wells which remain in serviceable condition.

From Beer-sheba, the trail winds across the steppe-land where the Arab descendants of Abraham still find a scanty pasturage for their flocks. Then comes the real desert, surveyed only by the mysterious pathways which thread across the wilderness from oasis to oasis. One route—though it is hard to find—brings the traveler to the famous rivulet at Kadesh-barnea, now called '*Ain Kadîs*, the "Holy Spring," where the tribes of Israel encamped while the twelve spies were searching out the land of Canaan.

From here, if one be wise and brave and hardy, the track can be followed far southward through the maze of dry, beaten earth and dazzling sand and occasional sheltered pasture-land and bare, stony mountains and sudden, spring-fed groves to where, in the heart of the wilderness, two hundred and fifty miles below Jerusalem, great Sinai raises



Kadesh-barnea



Mount Sinai (*Jebel Mûsa*) and the plain where the Children of Israel encamped

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its many-colored, rock-hewn shoulders above the plain where the wandering Children of Israel pitched their tents while Moses tarried among the awful storm-clouds which shrouded the summit of the Holy Mountain.

III

RACES AND RELIGIONS

IT should be understood that the mass of the settled inhabitants of Palestine are not Arabs, though, by a loose use of words, they are usually called such by Western travelers and writers. These Palestinian folk do indeed speak the Arabic *language*; but so do all of the readers of this book speak the English language, although only a very small proportion of them are of the English race.

Nor are the people of Palestine Turks, although their country is included in the Turkish Empire, along with Armenia, Albania, Kurdistan and, nominally, Cyprus and Egypt. You occasionally see a government official who is a Turk; but the bulk of the inhabitants of the Holy Land are as different from the Turks in blood and speech as we are. They do not even belong to the same *group* of races and, except that the Turkish has borrowed a large number of words from the richer Arabic, their languages are no more alike than English and Russian. In fact, taking the Empire as a whole, hardly a third of the inhabitants are Ottoman Turks; and the remaining two-thirds, whether they are Christian or Moslem,

are quite unanimous in despising the Turk and hating his government.

The Arabic-speaking Turkish subjects of Palestine are properly called Syrians. They are a Semitic race, cousins of the Arabs and the Jews, and are the descendants of the various peoples who spoke Aramaic at the beginning of our era, especially the "Syrians" of Biblical days. They are not all of pure descent, however; for this land has been so over-run by conquerors and traders that there is found in Syrian veins an admixture of strangely differing blood. You see natives whose features remind you of the Greek, Abyssinian, Egyptian, Pole, Italian, German, Persian, Turk and Englishman. Florid complexions, and even red hair, are not uncommon; for the Crusaders left more than ruined castles behind them when they were finally driven out of Palestine, and *Salibi*, "Crusader," is frequently met with as a family name.

The typical Syrian, however, is dark-haired, with large, lustrous eyes (when not afflicted with the very prevalent ophthalmia), regular features, full lips, and a clean brown complexion which any American or English girl might envy. He is quick and imitative, and an eager, capable student when opportunity offers. Like almost all Asiatics, he is wonderfully apt at learning foreign languages, and is an adept at reading the character of those with whom he comes into even casual contact. As a merchant, he

is a true descendant of his Phœnician ancestors, thrifty yet keen and daring; and in his business relations he is not guilty of the petty niggardliness of some other Oriental races. If he is given the slightest chance, he has an astounding capacity for rising in life. My own Syrian acquaintances include students in several American universities, ministers of American congregations, doctors and engineers and merchants and editors in New York, Buenos Ayres and Rio de Janeiro. The proprietor of the largest restaurant in lower Manhattan is a Syrian; so is one of the foremost philosophical writers of the world, at least one officer in the United States army, and the editor of the best magazine in Egypt. Coming back to Palestine—if the tourist who alternately abuses and patronizes his “Arab” dragoman would combine with a business-like firmness something of Oriental friendliness and sympathy, he would find that, whatever the Syrian’s faults, he is courteous, kind-hearted, hospitable and lovable.

As to religious beliefs, the population of Palestine is not divided into Turks and Christians, but (disregarding minor faiths) Syrian Moslems and Syrian Christians. The former are descendants of the natives who embraced Islam at the time of the great Moslem conquest in the seventh century. The latter have held tenaciously to their ancient faith, which antedates the creeds of western Christendom. As we shall see later, there are practically no native

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Jews. It is difficult to give statistics, because of the absence of any reliable census, and also because, as has been said, there is no political unit or group of units corresponding to what we know as "Palestine." The population is probably slightly under a million, of whom about half are nominal Christians.

In the Turkish Empire, however, the word "Christian" does not necessarily connote any particular moral qualities or warmth of faith; for the reason that every one has *some* religion. In many respects the government is administered, not according to geographical units, but through the various hierarchies; and a person outside of any church would be literally an outlaw. If a man is not a Jew or a Moslem, he of course is a Christian. He may be a thief and a liar: he may be a paragon of all the virtues. But he is a "Christian" simply because he was born into a Christian family. That is all. A zealous but poorly informed American evangelist was once preaching to a Syrian audience, when he asked all those who were Christians to stand up. Every single person in the room rose to his feet. Of course! Did the man think that he was preaching to Moslems or Jews? I do not mean for a moment to imply that these Syrians are hypocritical in the matter. Not at all. It is simply that the word "Christian" has among them a clearly understood meaning which is different from that which we in the West associate with the name. And I imagine that,

under similar circumstances, if some great, terrible non-Christian power were threatening not only our faith but our civilization, every American, whatever his state of personal morality or the fervency of his own religious belief, would feel called upon to enroll himself among those who were fighting the forces of heathendom, for the preservation of a *Christian* civilization.

These Christians of Palestine are divided among twelve or fourteen sects, of which the most important are the Greek Orthodox, which our Catholics know as the "Greek Schismatic," and the Greek Catholic, which is affiliated with the Roman ("Latin") Church, although it retains some ancient Oriental privileges, such as the use of Arabic in the ritual, the administration of the sacrament in both kinds, and a married priesthood. Among the weaker sects are the Armenian, Coptic, Abyssinian and Nestorian, each of which is divided into two antagonistic branches, affiliated respectively with Western and Eastern Catholicism. The most powerful church is the Greek Orthodox; and throughout this book, when the word "Greek" is used, it will be understood to refer, not to Greeks by birth, but to the adherents of this sect, most of whom in Palestine are Syrians, although many of the clergy, especially among the higher ecclesiastics, are of the Greek race.

Besides the members of these ancient native churches, and the "Orthodox" Russian monks and

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pilgrims, there are a few thousand native Protestants connected with various mission stations, and a multitude of monks and nuns belonging to the great Latin orders.

The saddest thing which attracts the notice of the visitor to Palestine is the rivalry and hatred manifested between the adherents, and especially between the clergy, of the different Christian bodies, and the frequent exhibitions of petty jealousy or open strife which take place before the contemptuous gaze of their common Moslem oppressors. Yet the sympathetic visitor from the West can find extenuating circumstances which may cause him to be less bitter, though not less sad, as he contemplates the fierce, fanatical religious animosities of "Christian" Palestine. Everybody in western Asia is proud of his religion; poor fellow, it is usually the only thing of which he can be proud. There is no national spirit; no possible feeling of patriotism.* The Syrian knows the government only as an implacable power which taxes and cheats and robs and murders. Nobody loves the Ottoman Empire, not even the non-Turkish Moslems. And so the spirit of patriotism which in us finds an outlet in devotion to our nation, in Syria finds expression in loyalty to the sect. The Syrian loves his church as we love our country. He

* Since the revolution of 1909, this statement happily needs some modification; but even yet there is no such united loyalty to race and nation as is felt in nearly every Christian land.

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loves his church and hates all others. If he is a Catholic, he hates the Moslems and the Protestants; but most of all, he hates the other Catholic communions. He gives to his own church a blind, unreasoning, faithful loyalty, and will fight for it with the exalted devotion of a holy Crusade.

Properly speaking, the Arabs are the Bedouins whose fatherland is the peninsula of Arabia; the nomadic tribes of the desert and steppe-land who, like Abraham of old, scorn to live in houses made with hands.* Their long, low tents of black goat-hair cloth are pitched outside the towns, somewhat as summer camps of Gipsies are set up on the edge of our American cities. The tribes which are seen in Palestine are as a rule small ones, with from four to twenty tents. If a sheikh is very rich, his home will be divided by hangings of goat-hair cloth into three compartments; for the men, women and animals. More often, however, there will be only two rooms; one for the men, and the other for the women and the animals, who lodge together! The Bedouin's wealth is in the herds of cattle, sheep, goats and camels which constituted

* I am speaking now only of the Arabs of Palestine; for the great Arabic world stretches from the Strait of Gibraltar (which, by the way, is an Arabic name meaning the "Mountain of Tarik") across northern Africa to Egypt, Sinai, Arabia, and up into Mesopotamia; and in many places there are villages and even cities of settled Arabs, who are always looked down upon, however, by their Bedouin cousins.



One of the long, low, black goat-hair tents of the Bedouin Arabs



A Bethlehem Family

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the possessions of Job. One tribe will quarrel with another over pasture-lands or wells, just as in the days when Isaac's herdsmen fought with the herdsmen of Abimelech over the possession of the wells in the valley of Gerar. And any of them will cheerfully rob the luckless traveler whom gracious Allah delivers unprotected into his clutches.

Their vices and their virtues (for they have both) are drawn from the desert. They are the handsomest men in the world, these Arabs; but they are not the cleanest. In reverend demeanor and tactful courtesy they surpass the most cultured gentlemen of Europe; but they are notorious thieves. Their hospitality is proverbial. For three days the Arab host will protect one who has eaten bread and salt in his tent, even to dying in defense of his guest. When the time-limit of the salt-brotherhood has expired, the host will feel quite free to rob the former guest on his own account. Ordinarily the Arab lives on bread and milk, or bread and cheese. If a guest arrives, he will insist upon slaughtering the choicest animal in his flock. If there is no food at all, as frequently happens, the Arab starves for a while.

Indeed, there are hundreds of thousands of Arabs, especially in the Arabian Peninsula, who never to their dying day know what it is to have a regular supply of food. Yet these lean, half-starved warriors need only to have their petty inter-tribal rivalries submerged in the fervor of a Holy War to become

one of the most formidable armies in the world. They do not have a very clear idea of just what Mohammedanism is; but they will fight for it to the death. To-day, when the Turkish race is decaying, the Arab blood is the best in all Islam. Shefket Pasha, who led the army of the Young Turks into Constantinople and dethroned the infamous tyrant Abdul Hamid II, is a pure Arab from Bagdad. Nobody has ever really conquered this proud, free, wandering people, from the days when their flying cavalry harassed the well-trained Roman legions, to this very year, when the desert hordes are capturing the border fortresses of Turkey on the eastern edge of Palestine, beyond the Jordan Valley. And some of us are wondering what would happen to the Ottoman Empire—and perhaps to the regions beyond that—if these wild, independent, unconquerable tribes of Arabia were to find another leader like Mohammed or Khaled or Saladin, who could hurl them as a disciplined army against the hated and despised forces of the degenerate Turk.

IV

THE OLDEST CHURCH IN THE WORLD

ONE of my friends, who is an expert agriculturist, was examining a large photograph of the hills immediately surrounding Bethlehem. "What a bare, treeless country!" he exclaimed.

"Look at it again," I said. "There are no tall elm trees or chestnut woods like those on your own estate. But look again."

So he did; and before I let him lay down the photograph, he confessed that in that one picture of the "treeless" landscape there must be shown at least 20,000 fruit trees!

A great deal depends upon one's standard of comparison. I imagine that to ninety-nine travelers out of a hundred, Bethlehem is just one more ill-paved, unkempt, unsanitary Oriental city, noisy with the shouts of an unintelligible jargon and crowded with strangely garbed, fierce-looking "Arabs." But after you have become somewhat acquainted with modern Palestine, that same Bethlehem appears noteworthy for its tone of prosperous self-respect; its inhabitants possess unusual dignity; the men are sturdy

and handsome and the women are graceful and attractive; while the surrounding country, for all its lack of shade trees, reveals considerable fertility and quiet beauty.

So they called the place Bethlehem, the "House of Bread." The present Arabic name is essentially the same, *Beit Lahm*; but the meaning has curiously changed, so that now it signifies the "House of Meat." Bread or meat, the name is still a well chosen one for the largest, best-built and wealthiest Christian town in southern Palestine. Its present population is about 8,000, practically all of whom are Christians. Only a few are Moslems, and there are said to be no Jewish residents at all.

The town lies along the summit of a ridge which is exactly as high (2,500 feet) as the highest part of Jerusalem; but, like Jerusalem, Bethlehem is surrounded by slightly loftier hills, so that you do not often see it from any great distance. As you turn in from the main road near Rachel's Tomb, however, and climb up the slope of Bethlehem's hill, the whole length of the town is spread out before you; its white, block-like houses, with flat or domed roofs, forming a fairly level sky-line, broken at the left by the cumbersome buildings of the Church of the Nativity, and at the right by the slender white spire of the German Mission.

The heart of the town is what we might call the Cathedral Square, in front of the Church of the

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Nativity. Even in the summer-time this is crowded with a bright-colored and talkative assembly of hucksters, beggars, soldiers, monks of half a dozen orders, groups of busy gossips, housewives doing their marketing, loquacious and unreliable guides hoping against hope that some out-of-season tourists will drive down from Jerusalem to the City of David, and innumerable half-naked urchins, ready for any mischief which may present itself.

The dominant color-note in the scene is given by the singular costume of the women, who invariably wear a long, white, nun-like headdress, which falls over the shoulders and almost to the feet—as though all Bethlehem women belonged to some Sisterhood of the Virgin. And, at least when I was there, the most insistent sound was the *chip, chip, chip* of the stone-masons' chisels; for new buildings seemed to be in process of erection on nearly every street. Indeed, some of the narrower alleys were almost impassable on account of the piles of clean white limestone blocks.

On the streets opening from the central square are curio shops and little factories with their double doors wide open, so that you can watch the workmen as they carve trinkets out of olive wood, all of which is supposed to come from the Mount of Olives, or turn vases and saucers out of the black, bituminous "Moses-stone" from the shores of the Dead Sea, or cut elaborate bas-reliefs of sacred scenes on the

inner, mother-of-pearl surface of large shells which are brought from the Red Sea. Bethlehem is the chief center for the manufacture of such souvenirs, which are carried home each year by a hundred thousand tourists and pilgrims, and which are also exported in large quantities to Europe and America.

At the extreme southeastern end of the town, with its main entrance from the public square and its further walls looking down over an almost precipitous hillside, is the heavy, confused mass of the Church of the Nativity. The original structure is now surrounded by other churches and chapels and monasteries and religious schools; but our chief interest is, of course, in the central sanctuary, properly called the Church of St. Mary.

Tradition says that this was built in the year 326 by St. Helena, who had discovered in the cave beneath it the birthplace of Christ. At least, it is practically certain that the building was erected some time during the reign of Helena's son, the Emperor Constantine the Great, probably about 330 A. D. During the sixteen centuries since then, there have of necessity been frequent alterations and repairs; but so much of the original structure still remains that this must be accounted the most ancient of all existing church edifices, the oldest Christian house of worship in the world.

Everyone is familiar with the Biblical references to Bethlehem, and its place in the stories of Ruth and

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David and Jesus. It is perhaps not so well known, however, that since then there have been dramatic incidents in connection with the history of the City of David, and that from it there came the most important and influential work of Christian scholarship.

I have already referred to the building of the church by the Empress Helena, after which the town became a very famous resort for pilgrims and devotees of all sorts. Fifty years later, the name of another saintly widow was linked with the history of Bethlehem; for here, close by the Church of the Nativity, the rich and noble Roman matron, the Lady Paula, established the most renowned convent of all the early Christian centuries. In connection with the convent, she also maintained a hospice where were entertained travelers who came hither from the outmost confines of the Roman Empire, and where, more than once, poverty-stricken refugees from the troublous districts in Asia Minor and Syria found a welcome shelter.

The greatest thing which Paula did, however, was to care for the learned and somewhat unpractical Jerome, who came with her to Bethlehem in 386 and dwelt here for the last thirty-five years of his life. His study, so they say, was in a cave adjoining the Grotto of the Nativity. During these thirty-five years, Jerome became known as the greatest living scholar, and the town of his adoption was consequently the literary center of the world, so that

students from all over Christendom came to sit at the feet of the wise and saintly old man.

Jerome's literary activity was enormous. From his humble cell at Bethlehem went forth commentaries, translations of the Greek Fathers, controversial articles, and a widely-circulated correspondence which exerted a far-reaching influence upon the religious world of that day. But from the viewpoint of later centuries, all his other work is relatively insignificant in comparison with his revision of the Latin Bible, which has since been known as the "Vulgate." It was in Bethlehem that there was born the most famous of all translations of Scriptures, and it was under the affectionate care of a woman; for it is hard to believe that Jerome could have lived so long and studied so indefatigably without the wise and tender oversight of the Lady Paula.

During the centuries of Moslem rule, the city of Bethlehem suffered from fire and pillage, but the church never received serious damage, though it was so often in imminent danger that a whole series of legends have sprung up to explain its miraculous escapes. When the Crusading armies conquered the Holy Land, it was in this ancient church, at the birthplace of the Saviour, on Christmas Day of the year 1101, that Count Baldwin of Flanders was crowned the first Christian king of Palestine. Taking into account the place, the day, the congregation of noble warriors, and the significance of the fact that

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now at last the Holy Sepulchre was wrested from Moslem hands and the Crusading banners waved over the sacred hills, this Christmas coronation must have been one of the most solemn and dramatic events in all history.*

There are armed soldiers in the church to-day; but alas, they are Turkish soldiers, garrisoned here to keep peace among the antagonistic Christian sects, each of which is very jealous that it may have its full share of the honor of caring for the birthplace of the Prince of Peace. Indeed, the spark which started the Crimean War was one of the frequent conflicts between the Greek and Latin monks in the Church of the Nativity.

Entering the single central doorway, which was made very low and small in the days when the Christian defenders had to stand frequent sieges by Moslem mobs, we see the plain, sombre interior. Double rows of columns on each side separate the nave from the aisles; but all alike are bare of furniture or decoration, except that underneath the high, small windows can still be seen some badly mutilated mosaics placed there by the Byzantine emperor Manuel Comnenos in the twelfth century. Across the farther end of the nave and aisles is a strong stone wall, about twenty feet high, which was intended to serve as an inner fortification, in case an attacking party should force

* See further the author's "The Christmas City: Bethlehem Across the Ages."

its way through the little entrance door into the church itself.

The partition wall is pierced by three doors giving access to the transepts and choir, which, in startling contrast to the nave, are brilliantly lighted and are profusely adorned with holy pictures and ornamental lamps and gaudy tapestries. On each side of the altar a narrow flight of steps leads down to the sacred caves beneath the church.

There are six of these underground chambers, connected one with the other by narrow passageways. The first and holiest, the Chapel of the Nativity, is a fairly regular oblong chamber, forty feet long, twelve feet wide and about ten feet high. At the eastern end, between the two stairways, is a recess in the wall, richly decorated with marbles and mosaics and heavy altar-cloths and hung around with fifteen lamps of precious metal. Here is the Altar of the Nativity, the heart of the caves, the reason for the ancient church above, and for sixteen centuries the object of the reverent adoration of the whole Christian world. Under the altar there is let into the floor of the recess a silver star with the inscription *Hic de Virgine Maria Jesus Christus natus est*—"Here Jesus Christ was born of the Virgin Mary."

As we face down the cave from the Altar of the Nativity, just at our left is a somewhat larger recess called the Chapel of the Manger, which contains a marble shelf with a wax doll laid on it, and also the

Altar of the Adoration of the Magi. At the other end of the cave there is pointed out a round hole in the wall, from which water is said to have miraculously burst forth for the use of the Holy Family.

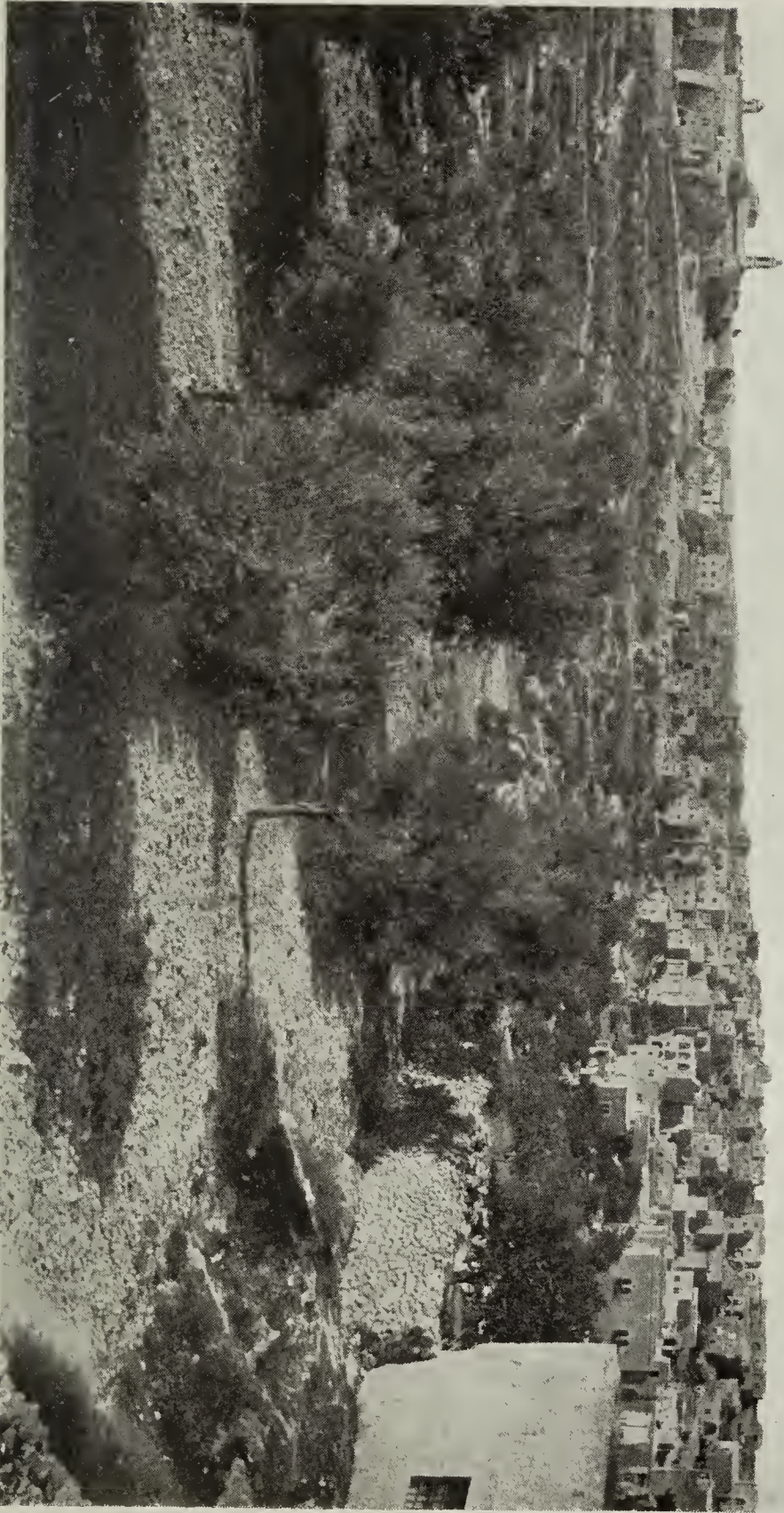
Here a narrow passage leads abruptly to the right to the second cave, where the angel is said to have appeared to Joseph, commanding him to flee into Egypt. The third cave is the Chapel of the Innocents where, according to a late tradition, Herod's soldiers slew several babies whose mothers had hid them here for safety. A recess in the next passageway contains the altar and reputed tomb of Eusebius of Cremona, who was one of the pupils of Jerome. In the wall of the neighboring cave is shown the sepulchre of the saint himself, as well as the tombs of his pupils and protectors, Paula and her daughter Eustochium; but the supposed locations of these last three burial-places have been changed more than once during comparatively recent years.

The last cave, and the largest except the Chapel of the Nativity, is believed to have been the study of St. Jerome. It may really have been. It is the best finished of the caves, the rock walls are covered with a layer of stone, and there is a little window looking towards the cloisters of the adjoining monastery, which was once reached by a stairway (now closed) directly from the cell. It seems that such an intensely devout student as Jerome would have been very likely to choose to pursue his Biblical studies, and especially

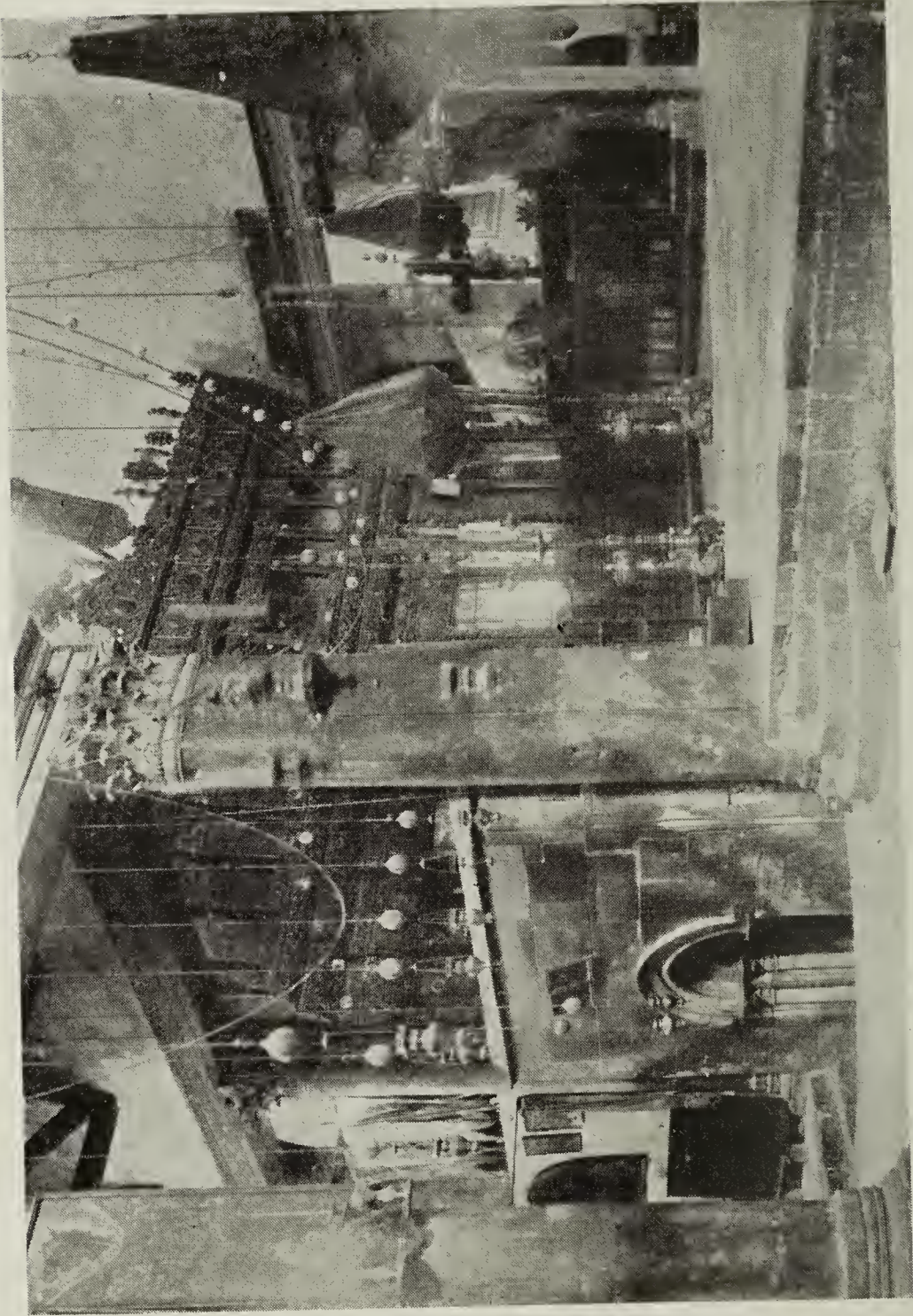
to prosecute his great work of translating the Scriptures, in some such place as this, long hallowed by sacred associations and so close to the scene of the Nativity.

But is it true—the inscription that runs around the Silver Star yonder? The Moslem guard who stands beside the altar would answer, *Allah bya'rif*—"God knows!" People have certainly thought it true for a very long while. And indeed, among the rocky hills of Palestine, natural caverns are still not infrequently used as stables. Remember that this particular church has marked the spot since the early part of the fourth century. In the third century, Origen speaks of the location of the cavern and the manger as if it were a matter of common knowledge. And even in the second century, Justin Martyr states that Christ was born in a cave. No line of Christian evidence runs much further back than that, except in the New Testament itself.

It may be so. Yet the air is so heavy with incense and the walls of the cave so overlaid with rich, tasteless ornamentation that it is hard to realize here the beautiful simplicity of the Gospel story; and yonder by the Silver Star stands the Turkish soldier with loaded rifle and fixed bayonet, a grim reminder of the smouldering fires of sectarian jealousy which, but for him, would burst forth still more frequently into murderous strife over the very memorials of the Saviour's birth.



Bethlehem. The Church of the Nativity is at the extreme left



The choir of the Church of the Nativity, showing the entrance to the sacred caves

THE OLDEST CHURCH IN THE WORLD

It may indeed be so. But as many a reverent visitor climbs up the little stairs from the heavy dusk of the holy cave into the dazzling glare of the gaudy church, he sighs, "That may be the place where Christ was born. But I hope not!"

One summer evening we went from the Church of the Nativity to the beautiful white chapel of the German Mission. There are many Germans in Palestine to-day. Their five or six little groups of farms represent the nearest approach to any kind of successful colonization of the Holy Land. The German hotels are to the tired traveler as the shadow of a great rock in a weary land; and the German peasant homes, German missions, German hospitals and placid, saintly German "sisters" are about the most clean, cool, wholesome, godly things to be found amid all the feverish rivalry and crass idolatry of modern Palestine. Since I have been in the land of the Bible, I have more sympathy with those quaint mediæval paintings which represent the Madonna with pronounced Teutonic features.

So we left the clamor and nervous bustle of the Bethlehem bazaars, and the thickly scented air of the ancient cathedral, and went at sunset to the cool, quiet little German church—the "Christmas church," they call it—and there we sat and watched the night shadows lengthen between the clean white columns while, just for us, the sweet-faced sister played on

THE REAL PALESTINE OF TO-DAY

the organ the tender melody of "Stille Nacht, Heilige Nacht."

No matter in which particular cavern-stable the Christ Child may have been laid! Here, in the midst of peace and love and self-devotion, we found the real heart of the Christmas City.

V

THE MYSTERY OF MACHPELAH

WHILE I do not retract what was said in an earlier chapter about the safety of travel in Palestine, it should be added that, when visiting the city of Hebron, the tourist should be accompanied by a dragoman (courier), and should exercise more than usual care to avoid offending the sensibilities of the Moslem inhabitants, who are notorious for their fanaticism and insolence. My friend and I had some extra seats in our carriage, so we invited two young Jerusalem acquaintances to accompany us on our trip to Hebron; and we were surprised to find that these boys, though born in Palestine and speaking fluent Arabic, did not want to walk through the city streets until they had found a friendly Moslem to accompany our party. Even then we met with black looks and muttered curses.

No traveler should think for a moment of omitting this ancient city from his itinerary: even ladies journeying without male escorts must surely go to Hebron. But the stranger must walk somewhat circumspectly, and must avoid any appearance of irreverence or levity, when visiting the holy places.

Indeed, it would be a very light-minded person who could be guilty of irreverence in face of the vast antiquity and sacred history of Hebron. Both Jews and Moslems count it as one of the four sacred cities of the world, which, according to the Jews, are Safed, Tiberias, Jerusalem, Hebron; according to the Moslems, Mecca, Medina, Jerusalem, Hebron. It is probably the oldest city in Palestine; for it is said (Numbers 13:22) to have been built seven years before ancient Zoan (Tanis) in Egypt. Josephus, writing over 1,800 years ago, reckoned the age of Hebron then to be 2,300 years; and for once the enthusiastic Jewish historian may have made his figures too small. An old tradition says that Adam died here, and many mediæval travelers speak of having seen his tomb. His footprint is still shown in a slab preserved within the sacred enclosure. Some say, however, that the footprint is that of Mohammed.

Coming from legends to facts, it is certain that there was a heathen sanctuary at Hebron long before the Hebrews entered Canaan. Outside of the city were pitched the tents of the great Bedouin sheikh Abraham. Here Isaac was born, and Sarah died, and the patriarchs were buried. Here dwelt the gigantic Sons of Anak, whose prowess struck such terror to the hearts of the timorous Hebrew tribes encamped at Kadesh-barnea. Hither Samson brought the gates of the Philistine city of Gaza. Here David reigned over Judah seven and a half years, until he

THE MYSTERY OF MACHPELAH

was here anointed king over all Israel; and here the traitor Absalom plotted rebellion against his royal father.

During the troublous years just before and after the beginning of our era, civil war often raged around the city, and the stronghold was captured and recaptured by Edomite raiders and Jewish patriots and Roman legions. From the seventh to the eleventh centuries, Hebron was under Moslem rule. Then the Crusaders held it for almost a hundred years, until in 1187 it fell into the hands of the great Saladin, since when it has remained in undisputed possession of the Moslems.

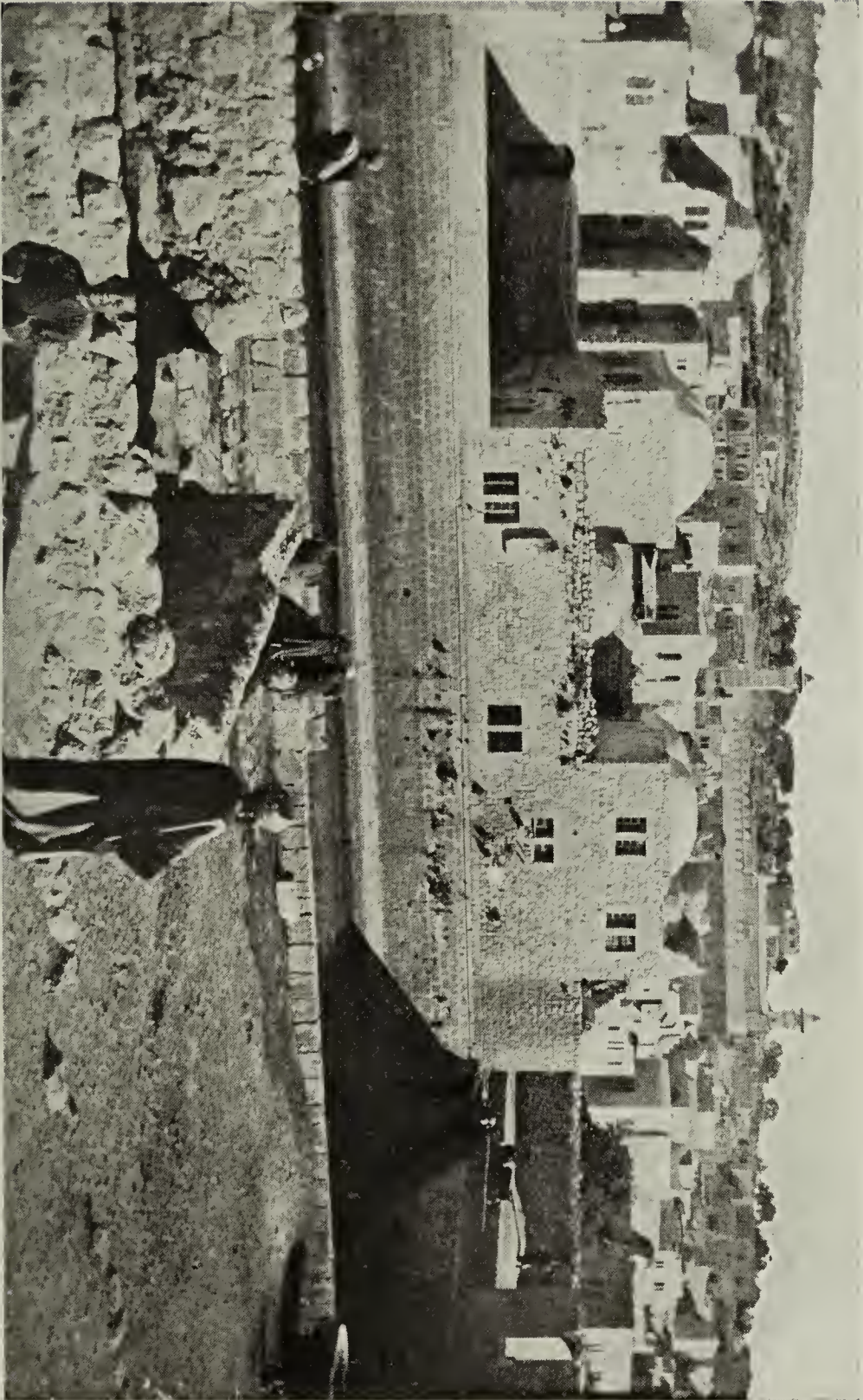
The name of the city has changed, too, with its changing masters. First it was called Kiriath-arba, or "Four-town" (compare Tripoli, which means "Three-town"). The Hebrews knew it as Hebron, which signifies "Association" or "Confederation." The Crusaders referred to it as "The Castle of St. Abraham." The Moslems, who speak of Abraham as "the Friend of God" (compare James 2:23), have named after the patriarch this city of his adoption, which is usually called simply *el-Khalil*—"the Friend."

The valley of Hebron, which runs from northwest to southeast, is fertile and well cultivated. The city itself lies in the neck of the valley, at an elevation of over 3,000 feet above the sea. The houses string along the north side of the highroad for about a mile

and, at the lower end of town, cluster thickly together in the neighborhood of the great mosque and the public reservoir. This last, like the largest pool at Jerusalem, is called the *Birket es-Sultân*. It is probably the same "pool in Hebron" beside which David caused to be hanged the hands and feet of the murderers of Ish-bosheth; for the gruesome warnings would naturally be posted in the most frequented part of the city, which, in Palestine, is always the square by the public reservoir or fountain.

As has been intimated, the eighteen or twenty thousand inhabitants of Hebron are nearly all Moslems, and of a very fanatical type. Some fifteen hundred poverty-stricken Jews live across the road from the main town, and cultivate their little vineyards, and step very softly in the presence of their Moslem rulers. Of native Christians, there are none at all.

Hebron is the largest city south of Jerusalem and, in spite of its great age, it is a busy, modern manufacturing town—that is, for Palestine. The houses are mostly well-built and two stories in height, which is not usual in this part of the country. Almost every house—indeed, almost every room—is surmounted by a dome. Even the flat roofs, and the floors of the second stories, are levelled over domed ceilings beneath; because wood for building purposes is very rare and expensive. There are few places in Palestine where there are trees large enough and



Hebron, showing the ancient pool and the *Haram* with its two minarets



The stairway leading to the Hebron *Haram*

THE MYSTERY OF MACHPELAH

straight enough to cut into heavy timbers, and a considerable proportion of the imports, therefore, consists of lumber and, latterly, iron girders.

The manufactures and trade of Hebron have long been famous. Glass-making has been an important industry here ever since the Middle Ages; and there are large tanneries which manufacture water-bottles made out of the whole hides of goats. The merchants of the place are very enterprising. They not only carry on a large business all over southern Palestine, but travel eastward far across the Jordan, and have warehouses on the edge of the desert, from which they supply the wandering Arab tribes.

Long centuries ago, while one of the friendly tribes of Bedouin shepherds from Mesopotamia was wintering on the edge of Hebron, the sheikh's wife died, and the bereaved chief bought from one of the townsmen a small field, with trees in it and with a natural cavern, which he could use as a sepulchre for his dead. "So Abraham buried Sarah his wife in the cave of the field of Machpelah, east of Mamre (the same is Hebron). And the field, and the cave that is therein, were deeded to Abraham by the Hittites for a burying place."

To-day that cave is not only one of the most ancient and sacred of sepulchres; it presents one of the most baffling problems which confront the Biblical archæologist.

The genuineness of the traditional burial-place of the patriarchs at Hebron is better attested than that of any other holy place in Palestine of commensurate importance, and thousands of American tourists have stood almost within arm's length of Abraham's tomb; but, so far as we know, no man now living has ever stepped within that cavern sepulchre. The Moslems guard it, but no Moslem dares enter it; not even the governor of Jerusalem. Perhaps no spot on earth possesses such a combination of hoary antiquity, religious interest and fascinating mystery.

The massive, fortress-like structure which completely encloses the rock of the cave is by far the most prominent object in Hebron; yet history is strangely silent as to when or by whom these great stone walls were erected. Architecturally, they seem to belong to the period of Herod. They may, however, be much older than that. According to one tradition, the *jinn*s (demons) built them. The ancient ramparts of hard, gray limestone are 197 feet long, 111 feet wide and in places 40 feet high. Some of the stones are very large; one measures over twenty-four feet in length. Above this imposing and well-built structure rises another, comparatively modern wall, which is plastered, whitewashed and ugly. At diagonally opposite corners of the quadrangle are lofty minarets, and along the short sides flights of stone steps lead to a long open gallery between the inner and outer walls, and thence to the interior plat-

THE MYSTERY OF MACHPELAH

form, which is about eighteen feet above the lowest ground immediately adjoining the structure.

But when you visit Hebron, you will not go up either of these stairways; for no "infidel" may ascend them. Near the bottom of one flight is a hole in the wall, about the size of a man's arm, which is said to lead into the sepulchre itself. Here the poor Jews of Hebron gather on Friday evenings, at the beginning of their Sabbath, and weep and lament, as they do at the Wailing Place in Jerusalem. Often they write letters to "Father Abraham," which they drop through this opening into his sepulchre. Christians are allowed to ascend as far as the seventh step on the southeast stairway; but to attempt to go farther than this would result in being beaten, and possibly killed, by the fanatical custodians of the mosque. When I even rested my foot on the eighth step, the crowd around me began to scowl and mutter, and the Moslem friend who was with me seemed very anxious to hurry me away. I have never felt more baffled and tantalized than when I stood there, so close to the inviting steps and the massive, mysterious walls, which, alas, have been for more than seven hundred years *harâm*—sacred—forbidden—to me and to all the Western world!

There have, however, been a few extraordinary exceptions to the rule excluding non-Moslems. The first of modern Christians to enter the sacred enclosure was Edward VII, then Prince of Wales, who

visited the Hebron *Haram* in the year 1862, accompanied by a small retinue, which included Dean Stanley, to whom we owe the first clear description of the interior. It was exceedingly difficult for even the heir to the British throne to obtain the coveted permission, which was finally granted only after lengthy negotiations, in the course of which the tremendous influence of Great Britain was brought to bear upon the Turkish officials. The governor of Jerusalem seems to have been sincerely concerned for the safety of the young prince; and his route to Hebron was guarded by thousands of Turkish soldiers, who at places stood literally elbow to elbow, for fear some fanatical Moslem might attempt to kill the sacrilegious "infidel." As a further precaution, the townsfolk were apparently forbidden to leave their houses or even to stand by the windows, for the prince's party rode through dead, deserted streets to the holy enclosure. When Albert Edward entered the shrine of Abraham, the chief custodian of the mosque exclaimed, "The prince of any other nation should have passed over my dead body sooner than enter here!"

Since 1862, on a few other occasions, about half a dozen in all, very distinguished Franks have been allowed to visit the *Haram*. In 1882, the princes Albert Victor and George (now King George) followed in their father's footsteps; and among Americans to be thus favored were our ministers to Turkey, Terrill and Lew Wallace, accompanied respectively

THE MYSTERY OF MACHPELAH

by my friends, Dr. Henry Otis Dwight, then of Constantinople,* and the late Consul-general Merrill, of Jerusalem.

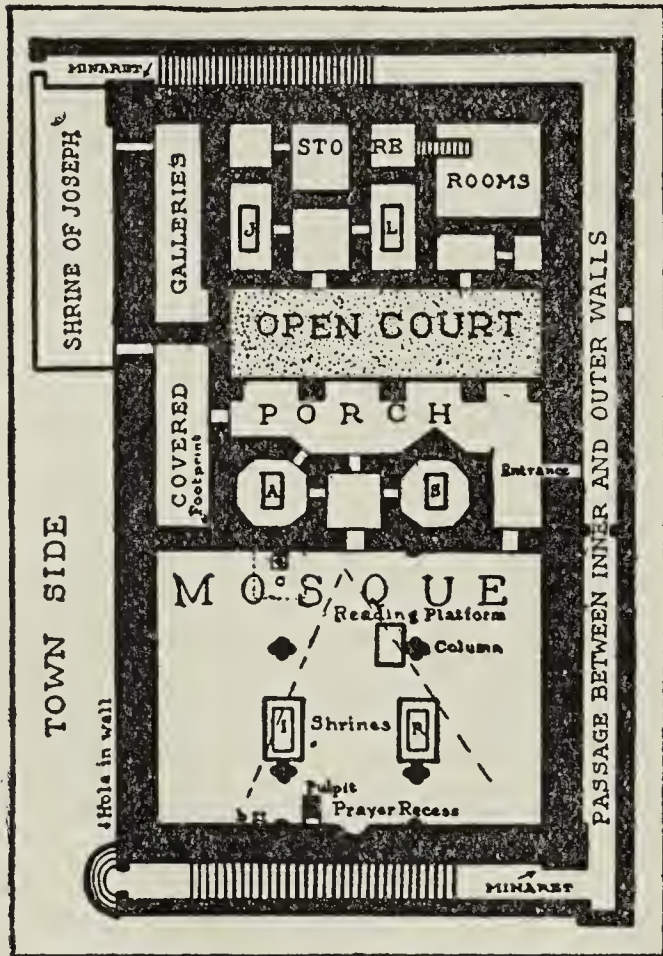
The southeast end of the quadrangle is entirely taken up by a mosque, whose gabled roof can be seen rising above the exterior wall of the *Haram*. In front of the mosque a four-arched porch opens into a small court, which is the only unroofed part of the sacred enclosure. Beyond this court are a number of small, irregular rooms.

The mosque, like so many others in Palestine, was originally a Christian church, built by the Crusaders in the twelfth century. It is about seventy feet long by ninety wide, and is Gothic in architecture. Four large clustered columns support the groined roof and separate the nave from the low, broad aisles. The floor of the mosque is covered with Turkish rugs. The walls are overlaid with marble to a height of six feet, above which runs an ornamental band of intricately interwoven Arabic inscriptions. The columns are whitewashed and their capitals are painted yellow; so that, as in almost every Moslem sanctuary, the general effect is of tawdry and careless disrepair, with all the beauty of the structure concentrated on a few of the most holy spots.

In the center of the southeast wall, toward the

* I am indebted to Dr. Dwight for permission to reproduce his rare photograph of the interior of the Hebron mosque.

holy city of Mecca, is the highly decorated *mihrab*, or prayer-recess, to the right of which rises the tall pulpit, with its domed canopy. Near the center of



The Hebron Mosque. The broken lines show the portion included in the photograph of the interior

the building (at the extreme left of the photograph) is the large platform from which the Koran is publicly read; and at the sides of the nave are the shrines of Isaac and Rebecca, with their walls of striped brown and red stone, their windows barred with metal grill-work, and their slanting roofs covered with heavy cloths.

Not counting the so-called Tomb of

Joseph, which lies outside the *Haram* proper, six cenotaphs, or formal tombs, of the patriarchs and their wives are arranged in pairs, about equidistantly along the length of the quadrangle, and are believed by the

THE MYSTERY OF MACHPELAH

Moslems to be placed each 'exactly over the real tomb in the cave beneath. The cenotaphs of Jacob and Leah are in two of the small chambers at the northwest end. It will be remembered that Rachel was buried on the way to Bethlehem. The monuments to Abraham and Sarah are in octagonal chapels in the porch. Only the shrines of Isaac and Rebecca are within the mosque proper.

It seems strange to us that Isaac should be thus honored above his great father; but the Moslems explain that, while Abraham was kindly and forgiving, as was shown by his intercessions on behalf of wicked Sodom, his son Isaac was of a very hot-tempered and jealous disposition, and would cause trouble if he were not given the best place—which is in peculiar contradiction to the Biblical description of the gentle, thoughtful shepherd prince.

Because of this irascible disposition of Isaac, it is thought better for even Moslems to avoid entering his shrine; and it is related that when Ibrahim Pasha, the Egyptian conqueror of Palestine, attempted to go into the holy place, he was driven out by the enraged patriarch. Christian visitors have been allowed to inspect the shrines of Abraham and Jacob (after a fervent prayer by the custodians that the great men would pardon the intrusion), but it was not considered proper for men to enter the sanctuaries of the women.

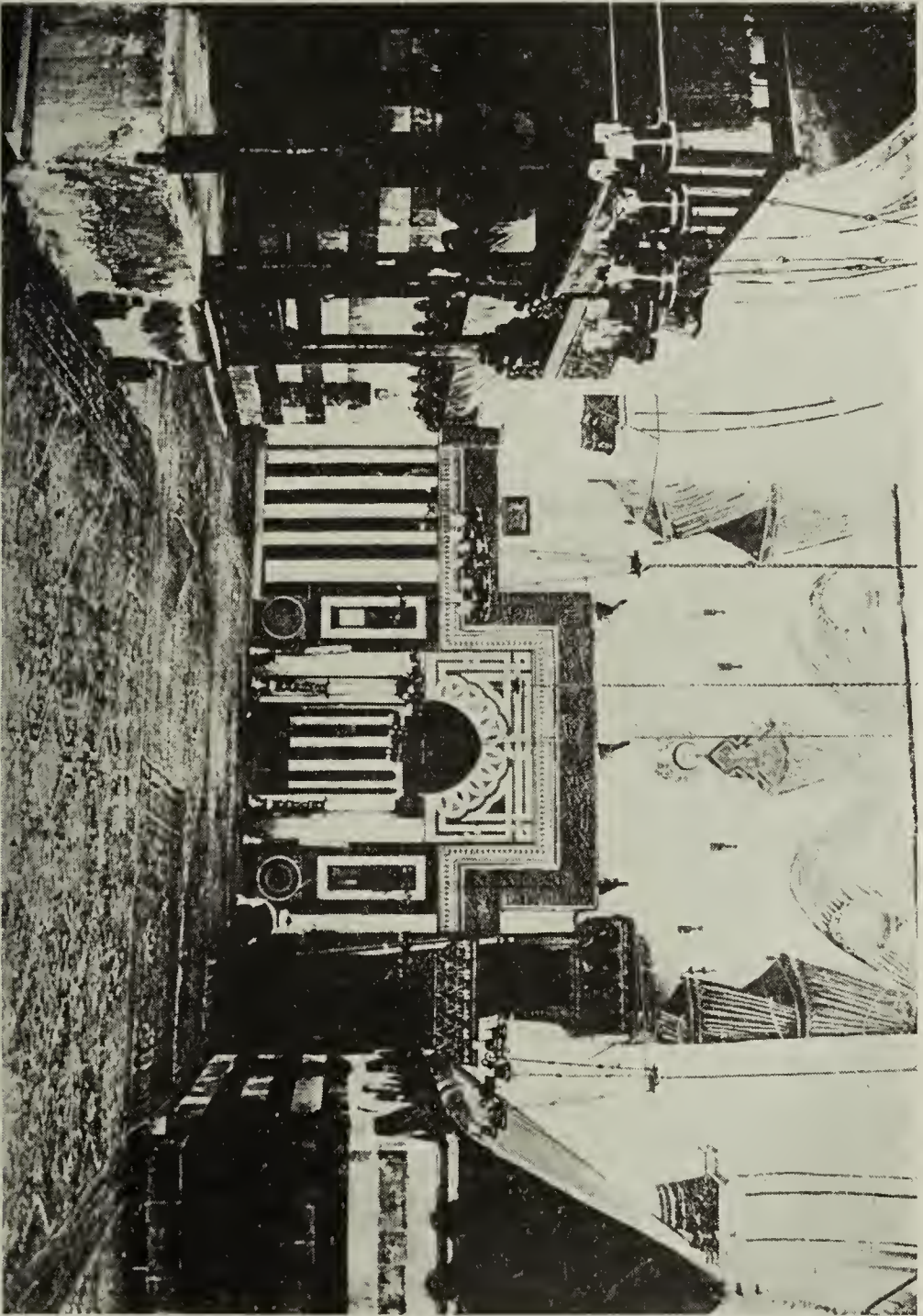
The interiors of all the shrines can be seen, how-

ever, through the barred windows. The inside walls are cased with marble and ornamented with gilt inscriptions in Arabic script. Lamps hang here and there. Copies of the Koran lie on low supports. Banners rest against some of the cenotaphs, which are coffin-shaped and covered with richly embroidered cloths, green (the Moslem holy color) for the men and crimson for the women.

But all that has thus far been described is above ground; for the Moslems hold the burial-place of the patriarchs in such awe that even they do not dare enter the real sepulchre which presumably lies beneath the mosque. They say that 2,500 years ago a servant of a great king ventured within the awful precincts. He went in, a perfectly healthy man and of unusual corpulence: he came out shortly afterwards blind, deaf, emaciated and crippled. Thus do the patriarchs punish impertinent intruders upon their chosen seclusion!

There are probably several small openings from the mosque to the cave, though those in the floor are now hidden by rugs. But near the front wall of the building (at *c* in the plan) is a stone like a well-curb, with a circular opening a foot in diameter, below which a somewhat larger shaft leads down into a lower room, about twelve feet square.* The floor of this room,

* Dr. Dwight informs me, however, that when his party visited the *Haram*, they were not shown the opening at *c* at all; but were allowed to look through a hole in the floor (*b*) at the



Interior of the Mosque of Machpelah. (See the plan on page 60)



Moslems of Palestine

THE MYSTERY OF MACHPELAH

which is at about a level with the ground outside the enclosure, is strewn with sheets of paper containing petitions to the patriarchs, and shows evidences of being periodically cleaned by the keepers of the mosque. It is apparently an antechamber to the cave; for in one of its whitewashed walls is a little doorway.

What lies beyond that door will doubtless remain a mystery as long as the Moslems govern Palestine. The custodians say that there is a cavern consisting of two chambers; and we are reminded that the name Machpelah apparently means "double." But what will the travelers of some future generation see when they finally penetrate the gloom of that ancient tomb? Is it true, as old Rabbi Benjamin of Tudela wrote seven hundred years ago, that six tombs are there, arranged in pairs, and that one of these bears the inscription, "This is the sepulchre of our father Abraham, upon whom be peace"? Would it be possible for the mummy of Jacob, which was embalmed in Egypt before it was carried hither for burial, to withstand the ravages of time in the damper climate of Palestine, until at last men shall look upon the very countenance of the "Prince of God," as they

other end of the mosque, alongside the pulpit. This was said to lead directly into the cave; but nothing could be distinguished below, on account of the dazzling light of a lamp which hung in the shaft. The patriarchs, according to the custodians of the mosque, do not like to be left in darkness.

THE REAL PALESTINE OF TO-DAY

have already looked upon the Pharaoh who oppressed the Children of Israel? These are some of the jealously guarded secrets of the forbidden tomb of Machpelah.

VI

THE DOME OF THE ROCK

IN any panorama of the Holy City, the most prominent feature is the large, level, open space to the southeast, in the center of which rises the symmetrical Mosque of Omar, the only beautiful building in Jerusalem.

The surrounding area, which is about sixteen hundred feet long from north to south and a thousand feet wide, is called by the Moslems the *Haram esh-Sherîf* or "Noble Sanctuary," and is considered by them the most sacred place on earth, save only the Great Mosque in the holy city of Mecca. On the west and north is the unkempt jumble of crowded, dirty-white buildings, above whose myriad domes rises an occasional minaret or belfry; at the south the hillside descends very rapidly to the hollow of Gehenna; at the east is an almost perpendicular drop of a hundred feet to the bottom of the Kidron Valley, beyond which rises the Mount of Olives. The greater part of Jerusalem, as well as the Mount of Olives, is considerably higher than the *Haram esh-Sherîf*; and yet it would be hard to conceive of a more striking situation for a sanctuary than this huge shelf at the

edge of the city, overlooking the valley. Even if there were no historical indications, we should be sure that this must be the site which was chosen for the ancient Temple.

It is only from a distance, however, that the *Haram* appears level. It is really gently rolling, except in the center, where there is a platform ten feet higher, paved with stone and marble. This inner platform is 550 feet long. It is entered through eight ornamental arcades, which are known as the "Scales," because upon them at the Judgment Day will be balanced the scales in which the good and evil deeds of men will be weighed.

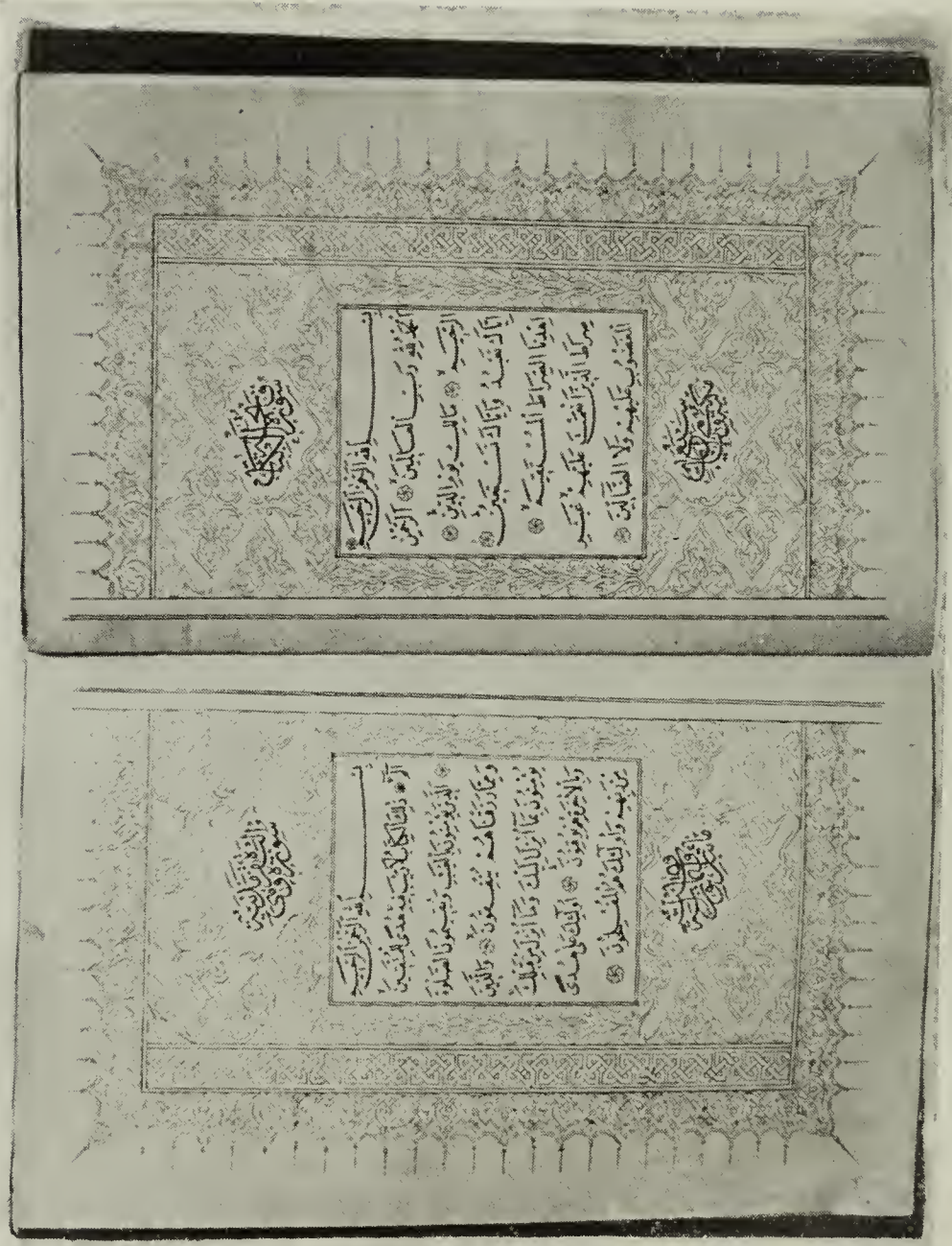
No one may enter here except with shoeless feet, or, in the case of Franks,* with the shoes covered by great yellow slippers, which are provided for the purpose. Indeed the whole *Haram* area is considered so sacred that it would be unsafe for Christians to visit it without the protection of the soldiers provided by the Turkish governor. I have been cursed for merely looking too intently at one of the outer gates.

There are a number of other holy structures around the central building. The Dome of the Chain is a kind of miniature copy of the Mosque of Omar. It receives its name from the Moslem tradition that

* The word "Frank" (Arabic *Franji*, *i. e.*, originally, a Frenchman), as now employed in Palestine, denotes either a European or American. It is not an invidious term; that is, as ordinarily used, it does not imply either superiority or inferiority on the part of the foreigner.



The Mosque of Omar from the south



بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ
أَلَمْ نَجْعَلِكَ لِلْعَالَمِينَ أَمِينًا
وَنَزَّلْنَا مِنَ السَّمَاءِ مَاءً مُبَارَكًا
وَجَعَلْنَا لَكَ نُجُومًا نَوَازِلًا
تُزَكِّيكَ بِهَا وَنَزَّلْنَا مِنَ السَّمَاءِ
مَاءً مُبَارَكًا وَجَعَلْنَا لَكَ
نُجُومًا نَوَازِلًا تُزَكِّيكَ بِهَا
وَنَزَّلْنَا مِنَ السَّمَاءِ مَاءً
مُبَارَكًا وَجَعَلْنَا لَكَ
نُجُومًا نَوَازِلًا تُزَكِّيكَ
بِهَا

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ
أَلَمْ نَجْعَلِكَ لِلْعَالَمِينَ أَمِينًا
وَنَزَّلْنَا مِنَ السَّمَاءِ مَاءً مُبَارَكًا
وَجَعَلْنَا لَكَ نُجُومًا نَوَازِلًا
تُزَكِّيكَ بِهَا وَنَزَّلْنَا مِنَ السَّمَاءِ
مَاءً مُبَارَكًا وَجَعَلْنَا لَكَ
نُجُومًا نَوَازِلًا تُزَكِّيكَ
بِهَا

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

The Koran, open at the first chapter, on the right-hand page

THE DOME OF THE ROCK

Solomon stretched across its entrance a chain which was endowed with miraculous powers, so that, if it was touched by a false witness, a link fell off. A second domed sanctuary commemorates Mohammed's famous journey to Heaven; and still another "dome" is dedicated to St. George.*

There is also an ablution fountain and an elaborate marble pulpit, where sermons are preached on Fridays in the fast-month of Ramadan. At the extreme southern end of the *Haram* is *el-Aksa*, the "Farthest" Mosque (*i. e.* from Mecca), which was erected in the sixth century as a Christian church by the Emperor Justinian (the same who built St. Sophia in Constantinople); but which Mohammed said had been a shrine of Islam long before he received his divine revelation.

But surpassing all else in beauty and interest is the Mosque of Omar, named after the third caliph, who conquered Palestine in the year 636. According to all the Arabian historians, however, this building was erected fifty years later by the Caliph Abd el-Melek.

* The saint is said to have been a Christian military officer, of a noble Cappadocian family, who suffered martyrdom in 303 A. D. at Lydda, where a famous pilgrimage church was erected over his tomb. The story of his killing the dragon is, of course, a transference of Perseus' exploit at Jaffa, which, in turn, is derived from the widespread Semitic myth about the destruction of the primeval chaos-monster. Strangely enough, this Christian martyr is a favorite hero of the Moslems, who call him *el-Khudr*, "the Ever-green" (*i. e.*, the undying), and frequently confuse him with Elijah. He was adopted as the patron saint of England by the crusading king, Richard I.

The mosque is not very large. In shape it is of an octagon whose sides measure only sixty-seven feet, and the top of the crescent over the dome is but one hundred and fifteen feet above the ground. The exterior is coated with marble as high as the sills of the fifty-six windows which encircle the building, above which are porcelain tiles in the favorite Moslem colors of green, white and blue. The lines are so simple, the coloring so warm and the arabesque ornamentation at once so elaborate and so tasteful that this mosque, which was built only two generations after the wild Arab tribes began to rally under the banner of Mohammed, remains to this day one of the most perfect of all religious edifices. There is nothing in Jerusalem to be compared with it architecturally; and as a house of worship it is so rich and clean and quiet that, with the exception of a few Latin monasteries and Protestant missions, it is by far the most sacred-seeming place in all the Holy City.

It is no wonder that the illiterate Crusaders took this splendid building for the Temple of Solomon itself. But they re-dedicated it with acts worthy of infamous Herod; for here, according to their own reports, they massacred more than ten thousand Moslems who had fled to the *Haram* for refuge.

We pass within the mosque through a doorway which is magnificently decorated with complicated geometrical designs and interwoven Arabic texts. I have lived long enough in the Turkish Empire to

THE DOME OF THE ROCK

know something of the horrors of Moslem rule; and yet I feel that no one should enter this wonderful sanctuary, which marks a spot revered for thirteen centuries by sincere believers in the religion of Islam, and before that for twice thirteen centuries the scene of solemn worship, who does not first read the Arabic inscription above the portal—the invocation with which every chapter of the Koran begins—

Bismillah, er-Rahmân, er-Rahîm,

“In the name of God, the Merciful, the Compassionate!”

The interior is open and spacious. It is about one hundred and seventy-five feet in diameter, and is divided by marble columns into three parts: a central enclosure and two concentric circular aisles. As is so often the case in Moslem houses of worship, the stones were many of them taken from earlier buildings; so that a close inspection shows differences in size, form and color. Doubtless some of these materials were taken from the ruins of the Temple of Jupiter, which was erected on this spot by the heathen emperor Hadrian. The accompanying illustration shows how some of the columns have marble blocks placed above the capitals, so that the cornice may be level.*

* Speaking of the photograph, I do not know how it happened, but in this very *sanctum sanctorum* of fanaticism, I was allowed to gather together a number of rugs, pile them breast-high near the outer wall as a support for my camera, and then take a time exposure, without being interfered with even to the extent of being importuned for *bakhsheesh*.

The upper part of the walls is adorned by bright-colored mosaics, above which runs a broad blue band, bearing in golden Cufic letters verses from the Koran which refer to Christ, denying His divinity, but honoring Him as the greatest of all prophets. Indeed, so highly do the Moslems revere 'Isâ, as they call Him, that a person daring to curse Christ in the Moslem city of Damascus would be torn to pieces by the infuriated Moslem mob.

Around the central section of the mosque is a wrought-iron screen placed there by the Crusaders. Within it is a second, smaller screen of wood, and then, in the very heart of the mosque there is—a rock! A limestone rock about fifty feet in diameter, and rising six or seven feet above the floor. That is all. Yet so famous is the stone that the Arabic name for the mosque is *Kubbet es-Sakhra*, "The Dome of the Rock." So sacred is it that in Moslem eyes it has no rival on earth, except that other stone, the Black Stone in the *Ka'aba* at Mecca.

Around this holy rock cluster numberless legends. According to Jewish tradition, it was here that Abraham and Melchizedek sacrificed together to the Most High God; and here also that Abraham would have offered up his son Isaac; and here that Jacob poured out his libation to Jehovah. This was the central point of the world, where the Ark of the Covenant rested. Indeed, the ark still lies buried beneath it. On this rock was written the mysterious,

THE DOME OF THE ROCK

unspeakable name of God, which Jesus succeeded in deciphering, and consequently was enabled by its aid to work His miracles. More probable is the supposition that the altar of the Temple stood here; for traces of a channel for carrying off the blood of the sacrifices can still be seen.

The Moslems believe that at the Last Day the *Ka'aba* of Mecca will be miraculously transported to the Mosque of Omar, and then upon this rock will be set the judgment throne of God.

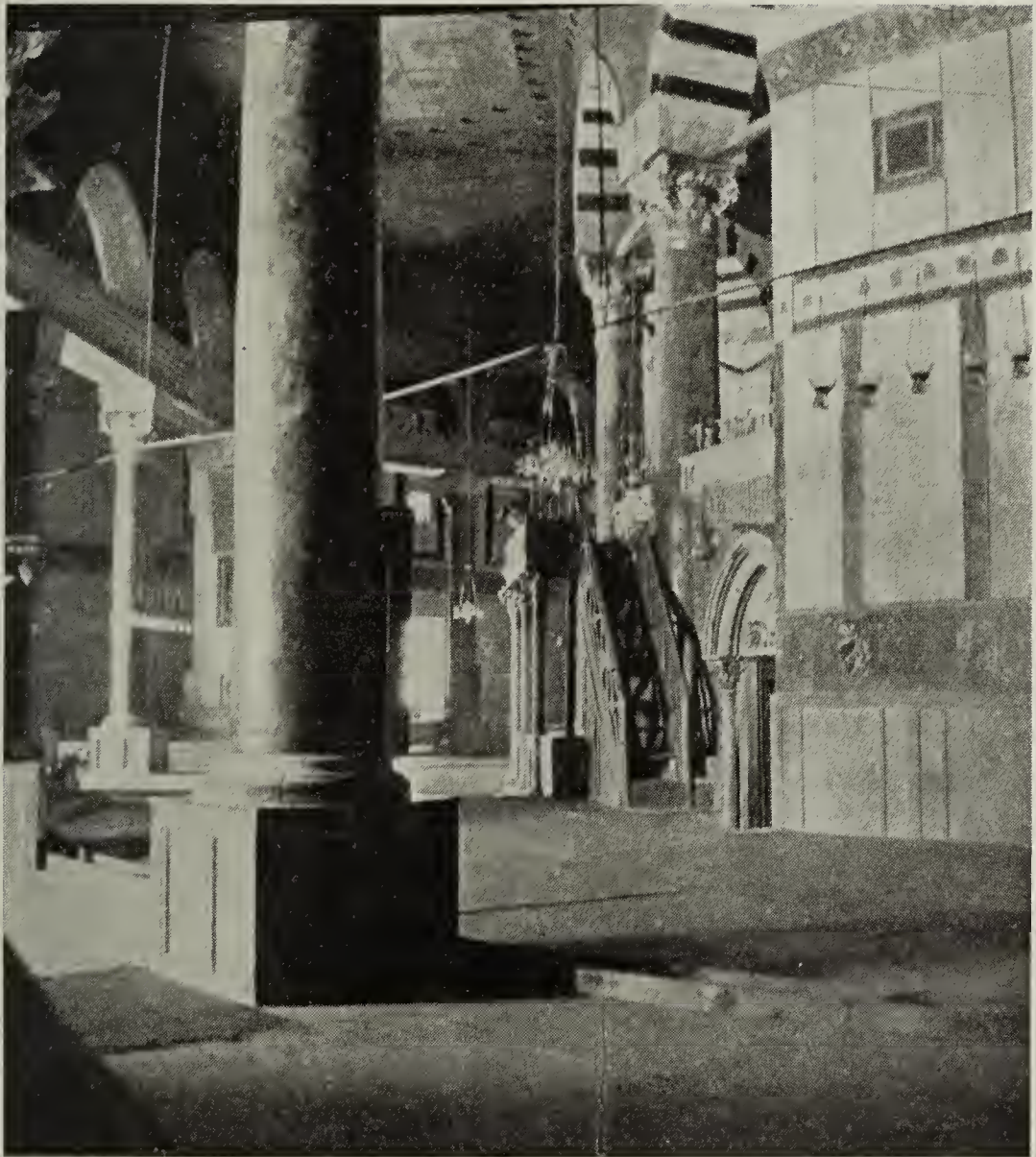
Underneath the rock is quite a large cavern, in which the custodians show the places where Abraham, David, Solomon and Elijah used to come to pray. Mohammed prayed here also, and declared that one prayer here was worth a thousand anywhere else. The prophet seems to have been unusually tall, for when he rose from prayer he left the impression of his head upon the ceiling. When he went on that wonderful night journey to the celestial regions, his steed *el-Burak* flew with him right through the roof of the cavern. The hole is still shown! The rock tried to follow Mohammed, and you can see the print which Gabriel's thumb made when he held it down; also the "tongue" of stone which praised the Prophet of Allah, and presumably besought the archangel not to restrain the rock's impetuous flight.

The great stone is suspended over empty space, or (a more popular view) it covers the entrance to hell. In the center of the cave is a loose slab of stone, and

the floor does indeed sound hollow when you knock it. The slab is comparatively new. It is said that until quite recent years, people used to come here and converse intimately with the souls of the departed. But a certain widow, who was more than usually talkative, carried so much gossip back and forth that she caused trouble in Jerusalem and also in—the other place. Finally the uproar below became so outrageous that the opening had to be closed in order to prevent further mischief making.

The level surface of the *Haram esh-Sherîf* is largely built-up artificially. The Moslems say that the mysterious substructures were constructed by the aid of demons. These are massive and spacious beyond description, and probably were begun thousands of years ago. Here are the great, vaulted "Stables of Solomon," where at least the Crusaders did keep their horses. And here are cisterns innumerable. Some of them could not be surveyed without a boat. One is so large that it is called in Arabic a "sea." It has a capacity of upwards of two million gallons.

Coming out again into the daylight, we climb the eastern wall of the *Haram* for a view of the city, which rises like an amphitheatre above us, and a splendid prospect past the Mount of Olives to the hills of the Judean Wilderness, and one dizzying glance down the outside of the wall—seventy feet straight down—to the steep slope of the Valley of



Interior of the Mosque of Omar. The Rock lies within the central enclosure, at the right of the picture



The sacred Rock at the center of the Mosque of Omar,
which has been revered from time immemorial

THE DOME OF THE ROCK

Kidron. And then we notice a horizontal column sticking out of the wall near the top, in a most peculiar and apparently unnecessary position.

According to the Moslems, when the end of the world comes, Jesus will sit on the wall above the column and Mohammed on the Mount of Olives, and between them a rope will be stretched, over which all men must attempt to pass. The righteous will succeed, but the wicked will fall and be annihilated in the valley far below.

According to another form of the tradition, only a spider's thread will bridge the chasm. Christians and Jews will strive to cross on it and will all be destroyed. Then the Moslems will be filled with terror and will beseech Mohammed to help them; whereupon the complacent prophet will transform himself into a ram; the faithful will be turned into fleas and, jumping into the fleece of the ram, will be carried safely over.

Thus—not only in Jerusalem, but all over Palestine—are the sublime and the ridiculous inextricably tangled together, and the most impressive localities and holy associations marred by foolish nursery tales.

VII

THE WALL OF TEARS

A CHAPTER on the Jews of Jerusalem should be very short, though that cannot keep it from being very sad. They number fifty thousand or more—two-thirds of the entire population—and have over seventy synagogues, besides hospitals and schools and other well-equipped benevolent institutions. But they do not belong in Jerusalem. I mean, they are not Palestinian Jews. They are German Jews or Spanish Jews or Russian Jews or Dutch Jews. With negligible exceptions, this is true of their few other settlements throughout the Land of Israel. There are ten times as many Jews in New York City as in all Palestine, and those in New York feel ten times more at home.

The Jews in Jerusalem are strangers and aliens; and they look it. Large numbers of them cannot even talk the language of the country (Arabic), and among themselves there are in use several widely differing dialects of Yiddish. They are unfamiliar and ill at ease in the land of their fathers. The old people seem very careworn and sorrowful. Even the young men look listless and woe-begone. But there

THE WALL OF TEARS

are not many young men. The typical Jerusalem Jew is one who has come here to die and be buried in sacred soil.

Some are American citizens—of the type of a certain Aaron Lowenstein whom I met one day at our consulate, where he was pleading for the protection of the Stars and Stripes against some act of Turkish oppression; pleading through an interpreter, because Aaron himself could not speak a word of English! I think, however, that he had really been in the United States. But in many cases the New York Jew practises Zionism, so to speak, by proxy. He becomes naturalized—after a year or two in America. Then he secures a passport, which he mails to his father or uncle in Russia. Whereupon the old man makes his way straight to Jerusalem, where his poverty and helplessness cause endless trouble to the patient officials of “his” consulate.

Zionism is one of the great idealistic movements of this materialistic generation, and too high praise cannot be given for the unselfishness and optimism and loyalty of the wealthy Jews in Europe and America, who have contributed so generously to the support of their co-religionists in the immigrant colonies in Palestine. But, as I have often told inquiring Jewish friends, the whole question of the Zionist movement can be summed up in one sentence. Palestine is essentially an agricultural country, and the modern Jew will not farm. The German colo-

THE REAL PALESTINE OF TO-DAY

nists *will* farm; and their little settlements in the Holy Land are quite successful. But if the flood of benefactions from the West should cease, the kind of Jew who will live in Palestine would rather starve than work the piece of land which has been given him. Of course, that is a generalization to which there are striking individual exceptions. But as a broad statement, it is sufficiently exact.

“Would *you* go back?” I ask my Jewish friends in New York—fine, manly, ambitious young lawyers and teachers and merchants, who are succeeding so well in this new Land of Promise—“Would *you* leave America for Palestine?” They throw back their heads and laugh at the mere suggestion.

The platform where their ancient temple used to stand is closed to the Jews. It would probably mean death for them to enter its jealously guarded precincts. They would be in as great danger if curiosity should draw them to the Church of the Holy Sepulchre. Once while I was in Jerusalem, a young Italian who was strolling about the building was mistaken for a Jew, and was beaten nearly to death by the infuriated Christians before their mistake was discovered. Even if the Jews were granted permission to visit the *Haram esh-Sherîf*, they would not dare avail themselves of it, for fear of committing the deadly sin of treading unwittingly upon the Holy of Holies.

But there is an alley within the city, which runs



Jews of Jerusalem



The famous Wailing Place, showing the massive stones of the ancient wall, before which the Jews of Jerusalem mourn over the vanished glory of Israel

THE WALL OF TEARS

for a hundred and fifty feet along the outside of the foundations of the *Haram*. The wall here is unusually high and strongly constructed, and the lower courses, which are built up of huge blocks of stone, may have been a part of the original substructures of the platform on which stood the royal palace and the Temple.

This alley by the old gray wall is the far-famed "Wailing Place." Here the poor Jews, exiles in their own land, can at least press their lips to the cold stones and weep over the desolation of Jerusalem. Pilgrims from the distant countries of their adoption come here to worship, and to make solemn vows, in commemoration of which they stick long nails between the stones. Some carve their names in Hebrew letters upon the wall, or with candles smoke pious prayers for the peace of Jerusalem on the weather-beaten surface. Some wail and shriek and tear their garments and their hair. But the old, old men just sit here all day long, and nod over their prayer books, and dream of the departed glory of Israel.

The place is seldom empty of these melancholy worshippers; but the largest crowds are seen on Friday evenings, at the beginning of the Jewish Sabbath, when they gather in their holy-day garments and chant responsively their mournful litany—

"For the palace that is destroyed;
We sit in solitude and mourn.

THE REAL PALESTINE OF TO-DAY

For the walls that are overthrown;
 We sit in solitude and mourn.
For the majesty that is departed;
 We sit in solitude and mourn. . . .
May the kingdom soon return to Zion;
 Comfort those who mourn over Jerusalem.”

“Is it true,” a bright young American Jew asked me the other day, “Is it true, as my grandfather says, that on the anniversary of the destruction of Jerusalem, the stones of the ancient wall also weep?”

Far be it from me to add another perplexity to the heart of the sad old grandfather. I answered, “I have never noticed it myself; but if stones ever did shed tears, surely these would.”

VIII

THE HEART OF CHRISTENDOM

IN a photograph of Jerusalem, it is not easy to distinguish the Church of the Holy Sepulchre.

Indeed, when you actually stand on a housetop and look out over the city, the most famous of Christian sanctuaries appears, not as a single prominent structure, but rather as a greater thickening and massing of the always confused and crowded buildings. For the church is not a single edifice, but a group of some thirty cathedrals and chapels and shrines and monasteries which during sixteen centuries have been, as it were, roughly piled together upon this holy spot.

Bishop Eusebius of Cæsarea, "the father of church history," who was a contemporary of Constantine the Great and an eye-witness of many of the events which he records, tells us that, after the conversion of the emperor, his mother Helena, although a woman of nearly eighty, set out from Constantinople on a grateful pilgrimage to the Holy Land, where she caused beautiful churches to be erected upon the Mount of Olives and at Bethlehem. This was in 326 A. D. Shortly afterwards, Constantine cleansed the

sepulchre of the Lord from all traces of the impure Venus worship which had been celebrated there under the heathen emperors, and built over it a magnificent church, which was formally dedicated in the year 335. Eusebius himself assisted at the ceremonies, and there can be no doubt that he correctly relates the story of the building of the first Christian sanctuary here.

But before many years had passed, the church had come to be universally ascribed to Helena, who had become a kind of patron saint of Palestinian architecture—by the fourteenth century no less than thirty churches were reputed to have been built by her—and pious historians tell the story of the foundation of the Basilica of the Holy Sepulchre with great detail. St. Helena, they say, received divine information concerning the exact location of Calvary and, removing the filth and debris with which the heathen had covered the mount, she discovered there the Saviour's tomb, and beside it three crosses. But the tablet written by Pilate had fallen from its place, so that there was apparently no way to determine which of the three was the cross of Christ. Finally it was suggested to test the miraculous power of the crosses; so they were each in turn placed before a woman who was suffering from a fatal disease. The first and second produced no effect whatever; but when the third was brought, she was immediately cured and rose up from her bed. Now that

THE HEART OF CHRISTENDOM

the identity of the True Cross was discovered, Helena built over Calvary and the Sepulchre a church of wondrous richness and beauty.

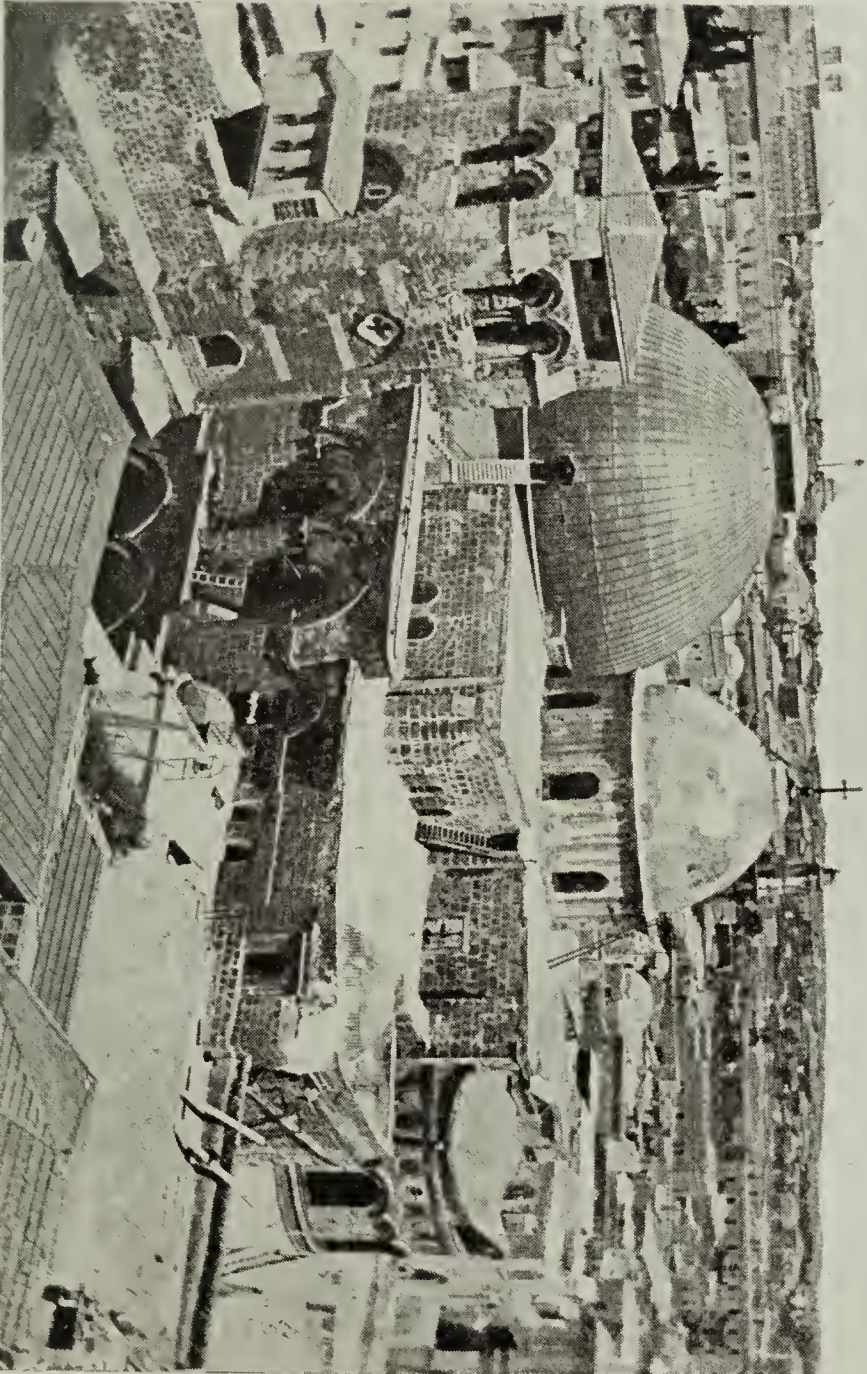
Whether built by Constantine or Helena, the present structure is not the one erected in the fourth century, however; for the Church of the Holy Sepulchre has been again and again destroyed; by the Persians, Turks and Arabs, and by disastrous fires, the last of which, in 1808, reduced almost the entire building to ruins.

In Arabic and Greek the Church of the Holy Sepulchre is more appropriately named "the Church of the Resurrection." It has already been noted that the edifice is supposed to enclose both Calvary and the Garden Tomb. During the centuries since its foundation, as many other sacred localities as possible have been conveniently localized under the same roof. Here is a partial list of the holy places, in the approximate order in which one meets them in traveling around the church.

The altar where Melchizedek and Abraham sacrificed—the place where Christ was nailed to the cross—where Abraham would have sacrificed Isaac—where Christ appeared to Mary Magdalene—the stone where His body was anointed for burial—where the women stood while they witnessed the anointing—the stone which the angel rolled away from the Sepulchre—the tomb of Christ—the tombs of Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus—the site of

the house of Joseph of Arimathea—another place where Christ appeared to Mary Magdalene—where He appeared to His mother after the resurrection—the column by which He was scourged—the garden of Joseph of Arimathea—the center of the world—the stocks where Christ's feet were fastened—the prison where He was kept—the place where His raiment was parted—where the Empress Helena sat while the cross was being sought—the place where it was discovered—where Christ was crowned with thorns—the holes in which the three crosses were set up—a cleft in the rock which reaches down to the center of the earth—the tomb of Melchizedek—where Christ was nailed to the cross—the burial-place of Adam.

All of these are not, of course, in the central structure, but are scattered through the maze of adjoining buildings. They are all under one roof, that is, you can pass from one to the other without going out-of-doors; but they open out at different angles, are on four or five different levels, and are so complicated in their interrelations that a detailed description would only heap confusion on confusion. An actual visit to the church leaves most travelers with a very indefinite idea of the relative location of the shrines. You go in and out, upstairs and downstairs, along winding underground galleries to subterranean chapels, and high up to archways of the domes and towers. Now there will be an open space reaching right up to the roof. Alongside of it there will be



The Church of the Holy Sepulchre



On the roof of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre is a street wider than many in the city below

THE HEART OF CHRISTENDOM

two or three chapels placed irregularly one above the other, so that you quite lose your sense of direction as you wind along dark passageways and narrow, crooked flights of stairs from one to the other. Even with the assistance of a plan, only a person with some knowledge of architecture can get an adequate understanding of the structure as a whole.

It is a veritable Brobdingnagian ant hill—a mysterious labyrinth—a vast, mountainous pile honey-combed with numberless unintelligible excavations, rather than what we usually think of as a church. In the rock beneath it are cisterns large enough to provide all Jerusalem with water during an extended siege. Upon one part of the roof is a whole village of Abyssinian monks, with the doors of the houses opening out on a street which is wider than many in the city beneath.

The principal entrance to the Church of the Holy Sepulchre is from a low, small square, which is always crowded with beggars and venders of souvenirs. It is impossible to get a near view of the entire building. Just inside of the portal are a number of very lazy looking Moslem soldiers, like those whom we saw in the Church of the Nativity at Bethlehem, and stationed here for the same humiliating reason. Beyond the guard, we reach the first important altar, at the “Stone of Anointing,” upon which the body of Christ is said to have been laid while it was being

prepared for burial by Nicodemus. The present slab was placed here after the fire of 1808. Some say, however, that the real stone lies underneath. Above the stone hang a number of precious lamps, whose ownership is divided among the Greek, Armenian, Roman Catholic and Coptic monks. In fact, all through the building, the honor of caring for the various chapels is divided among these four churches, while minor sects like the Abyssinians, Nestorians, etc., have less important shrines; and all alike very jealously resent any infringement of their rights.

Back of the Stone of Anointing, at the very center of the general mass of buildings, is the cathedral of the Orthodox Greeks, erected in the twelfth century by the Crusaders as a separate edifice, but now a church within a church. Architecturally this is the finest of the whole group of buildings, although the great fire of 1808 destroyed practically all of the work of the Crusaders. The cathedral is 120 feet long, richly decorated with lamps and paintings and gold-work, and furnished with no less than three enormous and elaborately carved patriarchal thrones. This is supposed to be the site of the garden of Joseph of Arimathea. In the middle of the nave is a small monument, shaped something like an urn for growing flowers, which is said to mark the center of the world.

“Mount Calvary” is located just to the south of the Greek Cathedral, upon an eminence whose summit

is fourteen or fifteen feet above the main floor. Here there are three small, dark chapels. The first, the Chapel of the Raising of the Cross, belongs to the Greeks. In the floor is a small opening, lined with silver, in which the cross of Christ is said to have been set up. Near this is a cleft in the rock (see Matt. 27: 51, "the rocks were rent"), which seems to be only a few inches in depth, but which is said to reach to the center of the earth. The tradition recognizing the spherical shape of the earth is, of course, much later than the one which places the center of the world on the surface, in the garden of Joseph of Arimathea.

The second chapel on Calvary marks the spot where Mary received the body of Christ. This belongs to the Latins, as does also the tiny adjoining Chapel of the Agony. These two are much simpler and more dignified in their fittings than the chapel of the Greeks; and, indeed, all over the church the Roman Catholics show a more becoming restraint in the ornamentation of their shrines and a more impressive dignity in their worship than do the Oriental sects.

The Chapel of St. Helena, where the empress sat while the excavations were being conducted under her supervision, lies sixteen feet below the level of the main buildings, and may be a part of the ancient moat of Jerusalem. It was probably here that the first Church of the Holy Sepulchre was erected. Of

course all remains of Constantine's basilica have long since disappeared; but the ceiling which the Crusaders built escaped the great fire which destroyed the upper portions of the church.

This chapel now belongs to the Armenians, who show the very seat where St. Helena rested. Two hundred years ago, the Armenian patriarch of Jerusalem naïvely lamented the fact that he had to renew the seat so frequently, on account of the vandalism of pilgrims, who chipped off pieces from it to carry away as relics.

Still lower down, and partly cut out of the rock, is the cave-like Chapel of the Finding of the Cross, which contains Greek and Latin altars, and a life-size bronze statue of St. Helena holding in her arms the newly discovered cross.

When St. Louis returned to France from the Sixth Crusade, he carried back with him a piece of the True Cross, as well as one of the nails used in the Crucifixion, and the Crown of Thorns; and the king erected the exquisite Sainte Chapelle of Paris in order to enshrine fittingly these precious relics, which, however, are now kept in the treasury of Notre Dame. The principal fragment of the cross, after having been carried away by the Persian Chosroes II and then returned, finally disappeared when Omar captured Jerusalem; but smaller pieces are shown in many churches throughout Europe. The "Inscription on the Cross" is now in the Church of

THE HEART OF CHRISTENDOM

Santa Croce in Rome, which is said to have been built by St. Helena to commemorate her discoveries in Jerusalem.

The heart of all this immense aggregation of buildings is, of course, the Chapel of the Sepulchre, which stands under the great dome. It is only twenty-six feet long and twenty feet high; but the little building is painted and decorated and adorned and overlaid with a lavish extravagance of inharmonious gorgeousness. In front (to the east) are two stone benches, on which Oriental pilgrims sit while they remove their shoes before entering the sacred structure. Around these benches are gigantic candlesticks as high as a man's head, surmounted by enormous candles, which are gilded, or painted with bright-colored, elaborate representations of incidents connected with the Crucifixion. A multitude of smaller candles line the cornice and rise, forest-like, along the edge of the roof, while the roof itself is hung with the inevitable lamps, whose ownership is divided among the more powerful sects. The marble walls of the chapel show only here and there between the gaudy paintings, which cover the façade so closely that they often overlap one another.

The interior of the building consists of two small, cell-like rooms. In the center of the first, hung round of course with lamps, is a pedestal bearing a stone (of quite impossible shape) which is said to be that

which the angel rolled away from the door of the tomb.

Through the rear wall of this vestibule, a very low doorway leads to the Sepulchre itself. This is only about six feet square, and is crowded and heavy and hot. Forty-three lamps hang from the ceiling, into which is cut a kind of chimney, which provides a very imperfect outlet for the incense-laden smoke. On the walls are marble bas-reliefs. At the right of the entrance is a marble shelf five feet long.

Such is the reputed burial place of Christ, the scene of the resurrection.

The entire surroundings of the Sepulchre are now so overlaid with marble that it is quite impossible to determine whether this was originally "a tomb that was hewn in stone" (Luke 23:53). But at least there is no other locality which offers itself as a serious rival. The garden tomb by "Gordon's Calvary" has hardly anything to connect it with the Gospel narratives except a sentimental feeling that this would be an appropriate setting. Since the early part of the third century, the Church of the Holy Sepulchre has been recognized as marking the location of the tomb of Christ. So far back there is an unbroken chain of testimony; and the identification is accepted by an increasing number of Protestant scholars, and, of course, is officially recognized by the Roman Catholic and Eastern Churches. On the other hand, there is that long gap of three cen-

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turies before the erection of the Church of Constantine, which is bridged only by the easy credulity of an age which knew nothing of historical criticism.

But whether this is the Sepulchre or not, the church around it is one of the most impressive and sacred buildings—I am tempted to say, the most sacred building—on earth. It may mark the spot where Christianity had its birth that first Easter Day. It certainly does perpetuate and vivify the memory of the incidents connected with Christ's passion and resurrection, and preaches to millions upon millions of His followers sermons in marble and mosaic which are no less convincing to them because the forms under which these great truths are presented seem to some of us to be crude and childish.

More even than that; this church is the great historic memorial of the Faith. Its story is the story of Christianity. Kings and queens have journeyed hither from far distant lands, that they might bow in humble adoration before the sepulchre of the King of Kings. Some of the most powerful fraternal orders, both lay and clerical, have, in fact or in ideal, been founded within these walls. Around this sanctuary was built the history of the Middle Ages, when, century after century, Crusaders fought with Saracens to win or to retain possession of the Holy Sepulchre, while Europe hung breathless on the result. History, romance, poetry, art: all have interwoven through them the pattern of the longing and daring

—and the sinning—which marked the quest of this most sacred shrine. The list of those who have worshipped or labored or warred here includes such varied names as the Empress Helena, the historian Eusebius, St. Jerome, Justinian the Great, St. Willibald the English missionary, Robert of Normandy (the father of William the Conqueror), Peter the Hermit, Godfrey de Bouillon, Louis VII of France, Lamartine, Chateaubriand, Chinese Gordon, Lew Wallace, Edward VII of England, William II of Germany, besides an innumerable and unbroken succession of indomitable pilgrims who, even during the cruelest years of the Saracen oppression, toiled slowly eastward that they might see the Saviour's tomb or die on the holy errand.

Within the great church there are indeed ornamentations which offend a refined taste, traditions which await scholarly investigation, ceremonies which sadly lack the simplicity and brotherly kindness of the Founder of the faith. Yet, when all that is said, the solemn fact remains that here, for sixteen centuries at least, has centered the love and devotion and hope of the Christian world.

IX

THE HOLY FIRE

IT was from a rocky summit near Bethel, just at sunset, that I caught my first view of Jerusalem.

We had been curtly refused accommodations at the monastery where we had expected to spend the night (the only such refusal that I remember), and the nearby *khan* was too unspeakably filthy for even hardened travelers. My only companion was a gentleman from South Africa, who did not know a word of Arabic; I had never been over this route before; and in half an hour it would be quite dark. It is no wonder that we were weary and worried; so that the very horses caught our dejection, and trudged heavily with lowered heads towards the next village, where, *inshallah* (God willing), there might be a stable for them and a bed for us.

Then, suddenly, a turn in the road revealed a triangular cleft in the mountains, through the very center of which we could see the Holy City, ten miles away. We were in the shadow, and the evening chill had come on. Most of the hills around Jerusalem were in the shadow, too; but a ray of the setting sun had slipped through some western valley and touched

the domes and minarets of the city with a dazzling glory. It shone in the dusk like a jewel of gold and diamonds, lying on a bed of purple plush. Yes, it seemed like the New Jerusalem come down from heaven as a bride adorned for her husband.

I have seen Jerusalem many times since then, and I have observed therein many things which are far from heavenly. But somehow none of the intimate details of life and worship and historic interest in that ancient city has fixed itself so vividly in my memory as that first distant vision from the rocks by Bethel, of Jerusalem purified and glorified by the sunset glow.

We stumbled through the unpaved, unlighted streets of the next village to the compound of a Quaker mission, where we found a cordial welcome; and the next morning—a perfect April morning, like the most beautiful day of our own June—we rode through the Jaffa Gate into the Holy City.

It was the day before Easter—the Greek Easter, which that year was a week later than that observed by the Latins and Protestants—and Jerusalem was thronged with pilgrims. All the roads leading to the city were filled with eager, hurrying crowds; and the square within the Jaffa Gate was so choked with the excited multitude that it was almost impassable. Besides the usual cosmopolitan gathering which is

THE HOLY FIRE

seen at every season of the year, two classes of visitors were especially prominent: the handsome officers and trim, manly sailors from the Greek battleship at Jaffa, and the vast number of Russian peasants, who had come thousands of weary miles, over muddy roads and in filthy steerages, at (to them) enormous expense and even at risk of life, that they might worship at the Saviour's tomb. These Russians are stolid and solemn, simple and sincere, as ignorant and trustful as dumb beasts; and when you see the big, bearded farmers and weary, sad-faced peasant women slowly and reverently counting their beads before some patently impossible shrinelet, their credulity is infectious. For the moment you believe with them, and also worship.

An hour after reaching Jerusalem, we were seated with the consular party under a little archway in the gallery of the rotunda of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, looking down upon one of the strangest sights of the modern world. For it was the hour when fire from heaven descends each year upon the tomb of Christ!

Beneath us, under the center of the dome, was the Chapel of the Sepulchre, around which a narrow lane was kept open by a regiment of Turkish soldiers. The privates locked arms all along both sides of this pathway, through which the officers walked back and forth, and preserved order by an unsparing use of rawhide whips. With the exception of this aisle, the

whole building was crowded to suffocation, not only in the central rotunda, but out in every direction, in corridors and chapels, as far as we could see. I should say that the crowd numbered at least ten thousand persons.

And such a crowd as it was! Men and women were pressed together so that they could not even raise their arms. The front ranks were driven back by the strength of hundreds of soldiers and the cruel blows of whips; the rear ranks were simply crushed until they could be crushed no more. It was a shouting, roaring, screaming, cursing, malodorous mob, as if a hundred football games and bar-room fights and election night celebrations were all rolled in together and all going on at once. There were many quarrels; fierce ones, too; not like the good-natured jostling of an American crowd.

Most of the people had been waiting there, holding their places, since the night before, standing perhaps twenty hours in that heat and stench. No wonder their tempers were uncertain! Now two big Syrians would enter into a bitter struggle for some place of vantage. Now a man would try to push his way into a better position, or break through the cordon of soldiers in order to perform the holy act of running around the Sepulchre, and would be pulled back by the heels, while the officers plied their whips upon him and the crowd jeered at his discomfiture. Now a little group of favored foreigners like ourselves would

THE HOLY FIRE

follow a gorgeously uniformed consular *karwass*, whose tall staff of office seemed to part miraculously through the seething mass of humanity a pathway, which closed again immediately behind his charges. Now a company of priests would quarrel with the soldiers. Now some poor fellow who had been patiently holding his place for hours would be roughly hustled out of the way, in order to make room for a late-comer who had bribed the guards. Among the crowd, the Bethlehemites were especially noticeable for their vigor and turbulence. The scene was strained, crushed, filthy, earnest, cruel. Sometimes the ladies in our party covered their faces. We heard afterwards that several Russian pilgrims were trampled to death. It was probably so. Such things happen nearly every Easter time. Not many years ago, over three hundred persons lost their lives in a panic which seized the already nearly insane mob.

It is a quarter past one. The miracle is not scheduled to take place until two o'clock; but the temper of the crowd is so threatening that already the ceremony is beginning. The Greek patriarch, in garments heavy with gold and jewels, marches through the open lane around the Chapel of the Sepulchre, followed by bishops and deacons, only less gorgeously apparelled than himself.

And now the crowd takes up a chant, fierce and loud and monotonous. Like the angry roll of thunder, or like the beating of storm waves on the coast,

THE REAL PALESTINE OF TO-DAY

comes the hoarse shout from ten thousand hysterical worshippers who are at the consummation of their pilgrimage—

“God has come to earth to-day;
We are saved by His blood.
We are glad;
But the Jews are sad.”

After encircling the chapel three times, the Greek pontiff is joined by the Armenian patriarch, and both together enter the shrine. What happens there? The Oriental priests say that a sacred flame descends from heaven upon the Sepulchre of Christ. An American Catholic priest whispered in my ear—no, shouted above the deafening chant—that the Roman Church refused to be a party to this heathenish farce. It would be interesting to enter with the two patriarchs and see how they act in the presence of this greatest of mysteries—or most blasphemous of impostures. But to the expectant multitude outside, it is all intensely true.

The moment has come! The fire is to be handed out through a little hole in the side of the chapel. Near this are stationed a score of large, muscular men, stripped to their underclothing. They are the picked runners, strong men from the different sects, who will take the fire and carry it to the chapels belonging to the Coptic, Armenian, Greek, Abyssinian

THE HOLY FIRE

and Syriac churches, which are scattered throughout the great building.

Everyone is silent now. And, after the long, deafening uproar, the silence seems stunning. Then suddenly a great bell begins clanging, as if for an alarm of fire; and again the vast multitude takes up its weird, thunderous chant. A flame appears at the opening in the side of the chapel. One of the runners lights his torch and shelters it under his bent body, while two other strong men hurry him through the crowd and out of the church. In a moment he will mount a waiting horse and gallop at breakneck speed to Bethlehem, where the Holy Fire will light the lamps in the Church of the Nativity. Others of the runners kindle their torches and, forming wedges like football teams, they push through the struggling crowd and bring the fire to the various shrines. In spite of the frantic efforts of the Abyssinian team, their torch is extinguished again and again, and it is only at the fifth attempt that they succeed in rushing the fire to their chapel. Greeks and Russians will bear the sacred flame to Jaffa, and then candle after candle will be kindled on shipboard, until at last the fire shall burn in the cathedrals of Athens and Moscow and St. Petersburg.

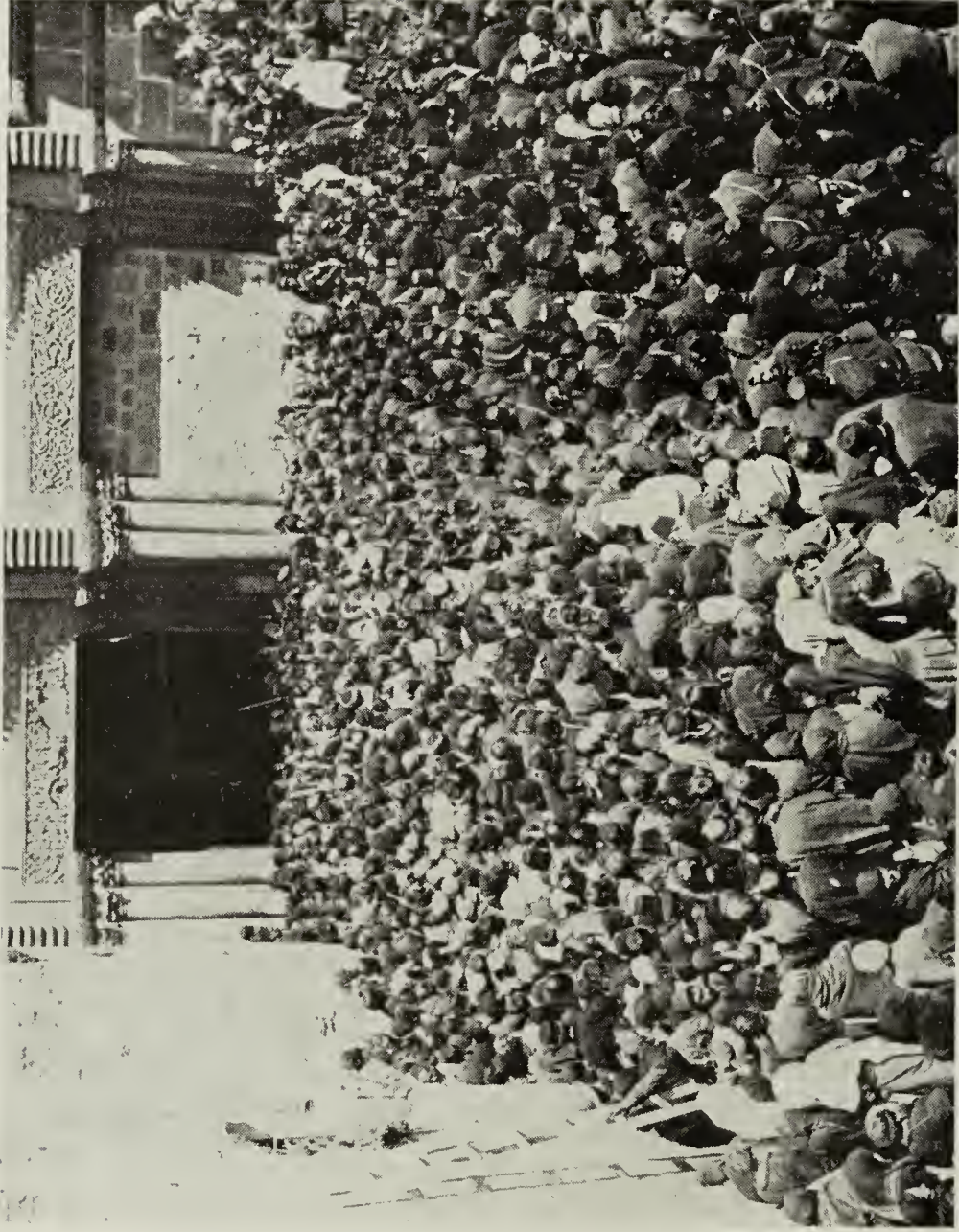
The soldiers no longer attempt to hold back the wild crowd. Here and there through the church, clusters of lights spring up. Each pilgrim bears a torch made of a dozen or two tapers tied together;

so the flame is rapidly passed from one to another. Bunches of tow are let down by ropes and, when lighted, are pulled up again to the galleries of the rotunda. Priests come out through trap-doors onto the roof of the Chapel of the Sepulchre, and light the lamps there. But my friend the American priest calls my attention to the fact that the lamps of the Roman Catholics are significantly left unlit. Away off in the dark labyrinth of the tremendous building scattered lights appear; and soon the whole Church of the Holy Sepulchre is one lurid mass of fire and smoke. A quarter of a million candles are burning with the Holy Fire. The already vitiated air is hot and stifling. Below us is a veritable pandemonium, a red inferno, through whose shifting mists we can see only faintly the struggling forms which fill every corner and niche of the ancient church. And all the while the great bell keeps up its harsh, monotonous clanging, and ten thousand throats are roaring out a chant which is half a praise to God and half a curse upon their fellow men.

Poor, happy pilgrims! They rub the sacred soot upon their bodies and let the flame play around their faces and their naked breasts. It will not burn them, they say. They will save these candles, and in far-away Russia and Greece and Abyssinia and Egypt they will light them for a little while on great festal occasions, while the untraveled neighbors sit around



The Chapel of the Sepulchre



Going to the ceremony of the Holy Fire. Notice the Turkish soldiers at the right

THE HOLY FIRE

in trembling admiration. The very caps with which the light is snuffed out are henceforth holy, and some time will be worn on ten thousand death-beds, as a sure passport to paradise. Poor pilgrims! They are so happy now. You can see it on their homely, care-worn faces. For they have journeyed far to see the Holy City, and they have lighted their candles at the very flame of God!

All night long, companies of worshippers were passing before my window, shouting jubilantly and singing their hoarse, minor chants. All night, too, the city shook with the clanging of the great bell. It was still ringing at sunrise the next morning, when I left Jerusalem to catch my steamer at Jaffa.

VALLEYS AND TOMBS

THE topography of Jerusalem will be most easily understood if, without trying to be too exact, we think of the city as occupying a square, fairly level platform, whose sides face the points of the compass. The northern edge of the square is about on a level with the adjacent country. When Jerusalem has been captured, it has always been from this side. On the east is the Valley of Kidron, which descends very rapidly as it goes southward. On the west, the Valley of Hinnom follows the line of the fortifications to the southwest corner and then bends eastward to join the Valley of Kidron. Thus from three sides Jerusalem is seen as "a city set on a hill," surrounded by moat-like valleys which are deepest at the southeast corner, where the junction of Hinnom and Kidron is more than four hundred feet below the level of the *Haram esh-Sherîf*.

The only part of the Jerusalem hill which lies outside of the present walls is the "Zion" suburb at the extreme south, where there are modern cemeteries of the Greeks, Armenians, Latins and Protestants,

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the English mission school, and the group of buildings which contain the "upper room" of the Last Supper and the "Tomb of David." This last is held in such reverence by its Moslem owners that it is practically impossible for a Christian to gain admission.

Beyond the encircling valleys, the "mountains round about Jerusalem" rise a few hundred feet above the city, like an outer series of ramparts. The highest of these surrounding hills is the Mount of Olives, which runs parallel to the eastern wall.

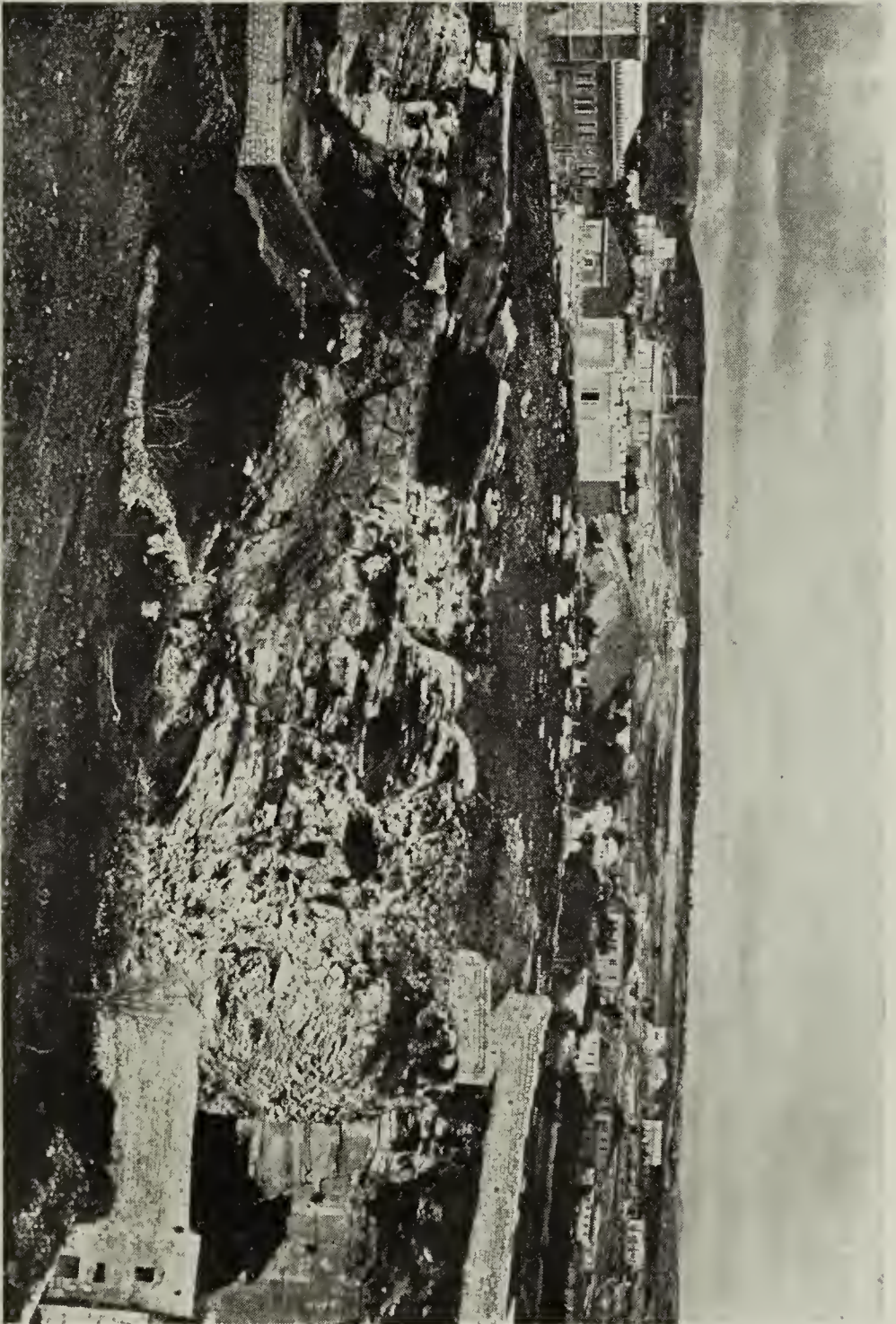
In the center of the northern wall is the Damascus Gate, which in Arabic is called *Bab el-'Amûd*, or the "Gate of the Columns," from the slender columns on the inside of the portal. This is by far the largest and most imposing of all the entrances to the Holy City, with heavy towers flanking it on either side, and elaborately castellated battlements, and the ruins of a room over the gate, like that where David sat while the watchman on the tower above looked for the herald with the news of the battle with Absalom.

From the top of the gate you get one of the finest views of Jerusalem. The city is one sea of domes, ranging in size from the myriad little domes over single rooms and dwelling-houses up to the large domes of the Jewish synagogues at the far southern end of the city and the great "Dome of the Rock," whose splendid silhouette stands out above all the

rest against the background of blue sky. Almost every roof has its low parapet of tiles, with the ornamental clusters of triangular openings which form a distinctive feature of Jerusalem architecture.

The street below us, Damascus Street, or more properly "the Street of the Gate of the Columns," is one of the longest, straightest and broadest in the city. Just inside the gate it is twenty or twenty-five feet wide; but it soon grows narrower, and is lost to view beneath the awnings which stretch across it from house to house.

Every once in a while some enterprising American newspaper publishes a story about the proposed construction of a trolley system in Jerusalem—which is quite absurd, because there is no street wide enough to accommodate even a single track. Indeed, except at the square by the Jaffa Gate, there are no carriages found inside of the walls. The streets are narrow, winding, hilly and slippery. They go up and down flights of rough stone stairs. They often cut right through buildings; so that a tall man has to bow his head as he walks through the low, arched passageway. Even horseback riding is unsafe; and until the hills are leveled, the houses torn down and the entire city rebuilt, the only method of locomotion through Jerusalem will be on foot, or on the back of a sure-footed donkey who is not disconcerted when the narrow road turns abruptly down a steep stairway whose slanting steps

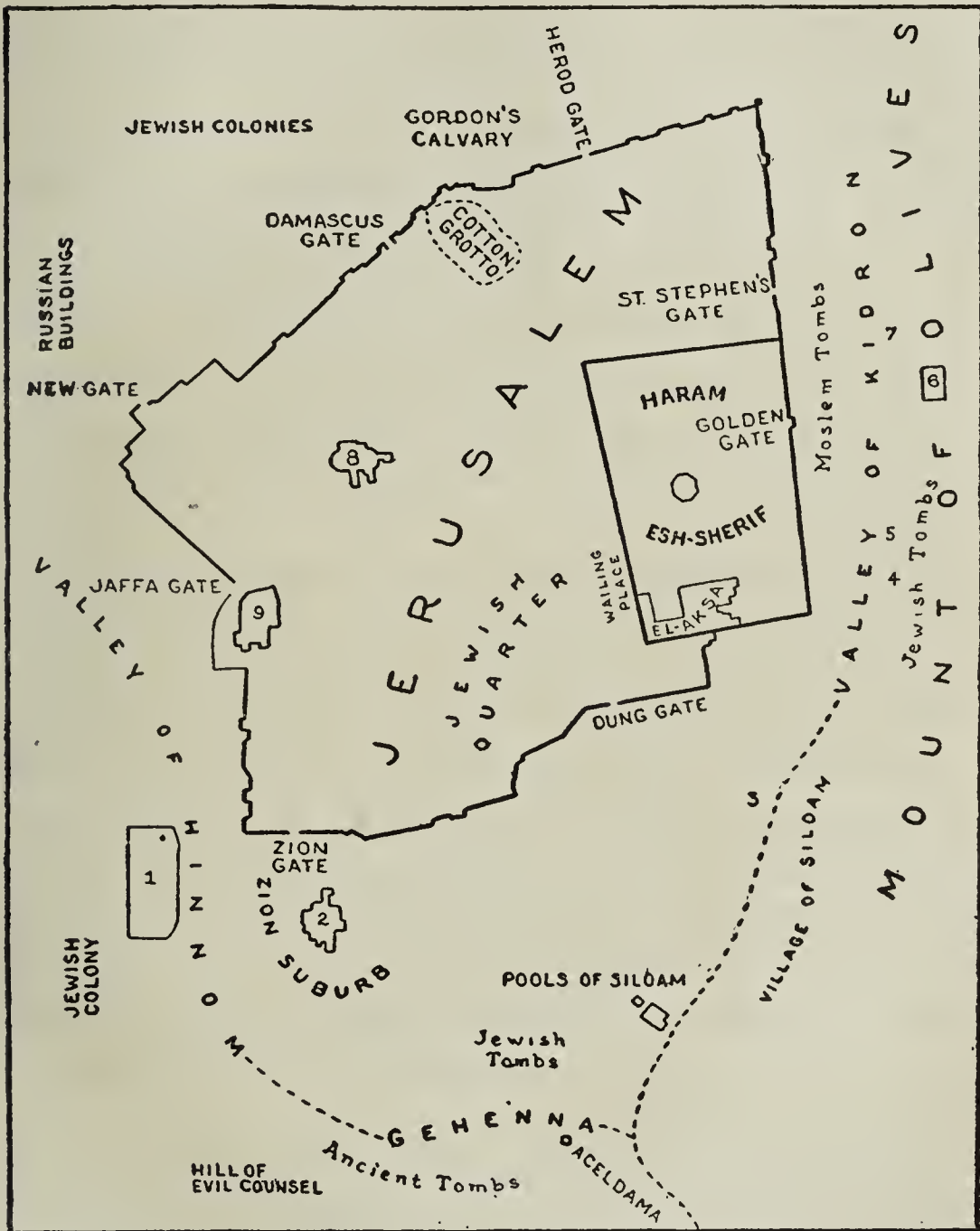


“Gordon’s Calvary” and the Grotto of Jeremiah (at the right)



Looking up the Valley of Kidron toward the southeastern corner of Jerusalem and (on the right) the village of Siloam

VALLEYS AND TOMBS



The Immediate Environs of Jerusalem—1, The Sultan's Pool; 2, The "Coenaculum," containing the reputed Tomb of David, and the Chamber of the Last Supper; 3, The Fountain of the Virgin; 4, The Tomb of Zacharias; 5, The Tomb of Absalom; 6, The Latin Gethsemane; 7, The Tomb of the Virgin; 8, The Church of the Holy Sepulchre; 9, The Citadel

are covered with a thin sheet of running water and sewage.

A little way to the east of the Damascus Gate, outside of the city wall, is the entrance to the *Maghâret el-Kettân* or "Cotton Grotto" ("cotton" is an Arabic word), one of the quarries from which building-stone was taken for ancient Jerusalem. This is apparently the cave in which, after Titus had captured the city, two thousand Jews took refuge with their treasures, only to perish miserably from hunger.

The excavation, which is also known as "Solomon's Quarries," extends over six hundred feet to the southward, straight under the center of Jerusalem. It must contain a mile or more of subterranean galleries, which open now and then into high rooms, some of which are as large as a church, and have their roofs supported by huge pillars. In these quarries can still be seen the niches for the lamps of the workmen, and holes made in the rock for the wooden wedges, which were driven in tightly and then wetted, so that their swelling might break off the blocks of stone.

Across the road, in the cliff opposite the entrance to the Cotton Grotto, is the "Grotto of Jeremiah." This is now a Moslem sanctuary. The excavation in the hillside is walled-in and partly plastered, and contains a number of small buildings and tombs, while several large cisterns lie in the rock beneath.

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According to local tradition, one of these cisterns is that in which Jeremiah was imprisoned. The prophet is said to have written his Lamentations in this quarry, and his sepulchre is also pointed out here by the Moslem custodians.

According to some travelers, the excavations in this hill resemble the eye-sockets of a great skull, and therefore a few authorities, chiefly English and American, regard the summit above the Grotto of Jeremiah as Golgotha, "the Place of the Skull." General Gordon was very much interested in the proposed identification, and the place is consequently often referred to as "Gordon's Calvary."

Under the brow of the hill is a small rock-hewn sepulchre, with two tomb-niches, only one of which has been finished (see Luke 23:53), and in front of the low doorway is a groove in which was rolled the stone (now missing) which sealed the entrance. This tomb is so like the description of the burial-place of Christ that it recalls the Gospel story very much more vividly than does the built-up and marble-covered "Sepulchre" in the church within the city. The surroundings, too, are more quiet and attractive. The grounds are well kept up by English Protestants, who have laid out around the tomb a little garden; and altogether, though this is probably *not* the Holy Sepulchre, there is no spot in or around Jerusalem where the Resurrection seems so real as it does here in the quiet garden on the hillside.

A half-mile north of the Damascus Gate there is an extensive series of catacombs known popularly as the "Tombs of the Kings" (i. e. of Judah). Probably, however, this was the family sepulchre of Queen Helena (not St. Helena) of Adiabene in Assyria, who became converted to Judaism about the middle of the first century, and took up her residence in Jerusalem, where she bestowed numerous benefactions upon the inhabitants.

We approach the sepulchre by a stairway, thirty feet wide, which descends to an open court, about a hundred feet square. This is cut in the solid rock, so that its floor is twenty feet below the surface of the surrounding hillside. At one side of the court there is a huge portal, fifteen feet high and nearly forty feet wide, which must have once been the most beautiful piece of sculpture in the neighborhood of Jerusalem. Around the great doorway can still be seen some of the elaborate and intricate carvings of fruits and flowers, in the ornate style of the later Roman period.

From the vestibule we enter the sepulchre itself through a small door, beside which is the stone which closed the opening. Within is an extensive labyrinth of chambers, on two different levels, whose sides are lined with the square openings of shaft-tombs situated so that the body lay perpendicularly to the walls. One of the rooms near the entrance contained no such shafts, but only a very richly decorated

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sarcophagus (now in the Louvre at Paris), which may have been that of Queen Helena herself.

A little farther to the north are the catacombs known as the "Tombs of the Judges." But we shall not have time to visit all of the sepulchres which surround the city. There is an underground Jerusalem which in many respects is more wonderful than that on which the sun shines. In every hillside are rock-hewn burial-places, some of them with labyrinthine passages leading to an intricate series of tomb chambers. Besides the hundreds of private cisterns, there are beneath the houses of the city scores of dark, low reservoirs, some of them so large that their farther end cannot be seen by the light of a torch. There are natural caves and ancient quarries and subterranean store-houses. In fact, the rock on which the Holy City stands is fairly honeycombed with mysterious caverns. New and unexpected discoveries are continually being made by foreign residents and archæologists; yet this underground Jerusalem has yet to be thoroughly explored.

On account of the peculiar configuration of the surrounding valleys, Jerusalem can grow only to the north, and the very different areas of the city at different centuries have been formed by moving back and forth the northern wall. At the present time the suburbs to the northwest are larger in extent, though not in population, than the city within the fortifications. Here are half a dozen or

more Jewish colonies, and most of the foreign consulates, and a number of monasteries, of which the Russian is the largest. In fact there is here a kind of Slavic walled city, with a cathedral, consulate, several hospices for pilgrims and a public garden.

But this new and foreign suburb has little to attract our attention; so we ride rapidly along the western wall of the city, past the Jaffa Gate and the citadel and the Pool of the Sultan, which have already been visited.

Just below the great reservoir, the Valley of Hinnom turns sharply to the east, and descends rapidly between steep hillsides which shut off the breeze, so that this is the hottest part of the immediate environs of Jerusalem. The hill at the south is variously called the "Hill of Tombs," the "Hill of the Field of Blood" and the "Mount of Evil Counsel." The depression in front of us is known as the "Valley of Fire." The ancient name was *Tophet*, the "Place of Burning." The names are all significant of the unattractive appearance and iniquitous history of the locality. Here in the Valley of Hinnom, which in Hebrew was called Gehenna, children used to be sacrificed to the god Moloch. From time immemorial Gehenna has been one great sepulchre, so hot and dead and dusty and desolate that Jews, Christians and Moslems alike have come to use its name as a synonym for hell. So Milton—

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“Tophet thence
And black Gehenna call'd the type of hell.”

On the hill to our left is a Jewish burying ground; the hill to the right is one mass of tombs. This must have been the ancient necropolis of Jerusalem. Some of the sepulchres have richly carved portals, with flights of steps leading to them. Some are mere holes in the rock. Some consist of several chambers with burial-shafts opening from their sides. Some are catacombs of considerable size. Some are cluttered and dirty. Some have been “cleansed” and decorated with mediæval religious frescoes. Some are now used as chapels. Some bear half-legible inscriptions in Hebrew. One is known by the Greeks as “the cave of the giant saint Onophrius.” One was apparently the burial-place of Roman pilgrims. One is the tomb of a girl named Thekla. But the most impressive thing about them is just their mere number, and the pathetic futility of the individual achievements they were designed to perpetuate.

Near the bottom of the valley is the *Aeldama*, or Building of the Field of Blood, which the natives strangely call “Paradise.” This is a charnel house, with its back in the hillside. During the Middle Ages it was a favorite spot for the burial of pilgrims. Its soil was believed to possess the miraculous power of decomposing bodies in one day; and ship-loads of the wonderful earth were carried from

here in the year 1218 to cover the *Campo Santo* of Pisa. The *Aceldama* consists of a large square room with an arched roof and badly damaged walls, in which are two niches filled with bones. Underneath the rubbish at the bottom of the building lie more bones, an incredible number of them, packed closely together for a depth of at least six feet.

We now leave Gehenna and turn northward to ride up the Valley of Kidron. At our right, on the steep slope of the Mount of Olives, is the miserable village of Siloam. From a distance it can hardly be distinguished against the hillside; for the houses are built up of native rock, and indeed, are often nothing more or less than ancient Jewish tombs, with a few rough stones piled up across the opening. These were once the habitations of the dead; later on they were the cells of hermits. Now they shelter a squalid and filthy population of Moslems, who are notorious as thieves.

At the left of the road are the Pools of Siloam; for there are two of them. The lower and larger reservoir is now dry, or rather is filled with a moist mass of unspeakable filth and ordure. The Syrians call it the "Red Pool." Our road passes along the top of the lower dam, which is over forty feet thick and once formed part of the outer fortifications of the city. On this dam is shown a very old mulberry tree, now buttressed by stones, underneath which



In the foreground is the upper Pool of Siloam, back of which is seen the "Red Pool" and the tree of Isaiah's martyrdom ' .



The Tomb of Absalom and the Russian Church on the
Mount of Olives

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tradition says that the prophet Isaiah was sawn asunder in the presence of the wicked king Manasseh.

The upper Pool of Siloam, which is still called by its ancient name, is the smallest of the circle of outer reservoirs of Jerusalem, yet the one with the most interesting and authentic history; and on account of its connection with Old Testament events, as well as the New Testament miracle, this little pool has long been considered sacred by Jews, Christians and Moslems. All sorts of curious legends have grown up about it. The water really comes through a rock-tunnel from the Fountain of the Virgin which we shall pass a quarter of a mile farther on; but the Christians used to think that it came from Shiloh, while the Moslems say that on a certain night in the year the water flows from the sacred well Zem Zem at Mecca. In the fifth century a church was built over the pool, and in the twelfth century a monastery was erected here. Recent excavations have revealed the ruins of the once beautiful church; but the walls of the pool are now fallen in, and the bottom is covered with filth and rubbish. Yet we saw a number of women filling their water-skins with the muddy mixture that had collected at one end of the pool.

At this southeast angle of Jerusalem the fortifications reach their greatest height and massiveness. Near the corner, the wall rises over seventy feet above the present level of the hillside, and extends down almost as far through the accumulated debris to the

rock foundation of the ancient city. The configuration of Jerusalem has been considerably altered through the deposit of the rubbish and ruins of the centuries. The ancient bed of the brook Kidron is in places thirty-eight feet lower than the present surface of the valley. The Tyropœon Valley also, which cut across the city from northwest to southeast between Mount Zion and the Temple Mount, has been so largely filled up that it is likely to escape the notice of the casual visitor. Through a large part of the area within the fortifications, the old Hebrew city lies buried at a considerable depth beneath the modern streets.

The steep, rocky slope of the Mount of Olives opposite the southern end of the *Haram esh-Sherîf* is covered with hundreds and thousands of flat Jewish tombstones, which in places are so crowded together that it would be hard to find room to dig a new grave between those already existing. Alongside of the road, three or four more imposing sepulchres rise above the multitude of common graves. The first of these is a temple-like monument thirty feet high, hewn out of the native rock of the hillside. Both Jews and Christians call it the "Tomb of Zacharias," but they differ as to which of the notable persons bearing this name was buried here. Nearby, a Doric portico cut in the rock leads to a small catacomb known as the "Grotto of St. James," because the apostle is said to have hidden here dur-

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ing the trial and crucifixion of Christ. The last of these larger tombs is a tall, separated building, the main part of which has also been cut out of the hill; but as the surrounding rock did not rise high enough, the superstructure had to be built on afterwards. The sepulchre is more than fifty feet high, and is crowned by a kind of combination of spire and dome, shaped something like a fool's cap. Indeed, the Arabic name for the monument is "Pharaoh's Cap." The Jews believe this to be the tomb of the traitor Absalom; so they spit upon it and throw stones at it as they pass by.

Where the road from St. Stephen's Gate to the Mount of Olives crosses our road up the Kidron Valley, there has been a church since long before the Moslems captured Jerusalem, although the present building dates only from the First Crusade. It is a strange church; for the only part above ground is the entrance porch, which itself is in a kind of pit in the bottom of the valley. From this porch a long, broad flight of sixty marble steps leads down thirty-five feet into a low, dark church, which is hardly larger than the stairway by which it is reached. In a niche half-way down the stairs is shown the tomb of Joseph of Nazareth, and a corresponding opening on the other side contains the traditional tombs of Joachim and Anne, the parents of the Virgin. In the center of the subterranean church is a kind of miniature reproduction of the Chapel of the Sepulchre,

which contains the sarcophagus of the Virgin, who is said to have lain here until her assumption into heaven.

Not only the Jews, but also the Moslems and native Christians, believe that the Valley of Kidron will be the scene of the Last Judgment, when the hills on either side will move apart, in order to allow room for the innumerable multitude which will assemble here. Accordingly the Moslems have a burying-ground on the western side of the valley, just under the walls of the *Haram*. Back of these tombs is a city gate, which is now, however, closed. It has perhaps not been used for general traffic since the time of Ezekiel's vision, when it was commanded to be shut because "the God of Israel hath entered in by it" (Ezek. 44:2). The Crusaders opened it only for the Palm Sunday procession. Since the early centuries of our era, Christians have known this as the "Golden Gate." The Moslems call it the "Eternal Gate"; and one of its walled-up arches they have named the "Gate of Mercy" and the other the "Gate of Repentance." They say that at the end of the world a king (according to some, Jesus the son of Mary) will enter through the Eternal Gate and abolish the rule of Islam and reign in Jerusalem over the whole earth.

XI

THE MOUNT OF OLIVES

SOMEHOW I had always thought of the Mount of Olives as a small, distant, wooded, secluded retreat. As a matter of fact, the Mount of Olives is the most prominent elevation within the circuit of what we might call "Greater Jerusalem." It is higher than the city, longer than the city, so near that you can literally throw a stone across the intervening valley, and the summit of the hill shows many stretches of rock and sterile soil, which probably never were covered with vegetation. For the traveler, the Mount of Olives, slightly curving to parallel the curve of the Jerusalem hill, is like a dress-circle from which he looks down upon an open-air theatre, whose stage is the platform of the *Haram esh-Sherîf*, and whose back-drop and flies are the massed houses of the surrounding city.

On account of the steep pitch of the slope on the east of Jerusalem, there is only a single road from the city to the Mount of Olives; the one passing from St. Stephen's Gate at the north of the *Haram* down to the Tomb of the Virgin at the bottom of the Valley of Kidron. Here, however, the road divides

into three or four branches, which ascend the "Mount" at various degrees of steepness. The best carriage road is none too easy: the worst bridle-path rises four hundred feet in a quarter of a mile.

In the hollow of the valley near the Virgin's Tomb is the Garden of Gethsemane, that is, the Roman Catholic Garden. A little higher up the hill the Greeks have their own Gethsemane, which, however, receives little consideration from Western travelers. The Latin site lies in the fork of the road, and is surrounded by high, irregular walls, into which are set the Stations of the Cross. The little garden (it is hardly two hundred feet across) is very attractively laid out, with winding paths and symmetrical beds of grass and flowers, and contains a number of tall cypress trees, besides olive trees of such ancient and weather-beaten appearance that you almost believe the monks when they tell you that these trees were standing here in the time of Christ.

This seems to have been another sacred place whose position was fixed upon at the time of the visit of St. Helena, and nearly all modern writers believe that Gethsemane was somewhere in this general locality. The garden is shaded and cool and quiet, shut out by the high wall from the dusty roads which pass so close on either side. Nothing can be seen of Jerusalem except the lofty fortifications, above which rises the dome of the Mosque of Omar. It is a beautiful and fitting place for meditation and prayer.

THE MOUNT OF OLIVES

The hillside above the Garden of Gethsemane is dotted with a number of scattered olive trees, and there are a few orchards; but as a rule the great bare spots are far more prominent. Right in the middle of the slope is the Greek Church of St. Mary Magdalene, a gaudy and inappropriate structure erected by the Russian Emperor in 1888 and, according to local gossip, painted a new—and uglier—color every year since.

The ridge of the hill is covered now with a long, loose cluster of buildings. At the northern end are catacombs; at the southern end is the labyrinth of the “Tombs of the Prophets”; in the middle is a small and miserable village, inhabited apparently chiefly by importunate beggars. Scattered between, are churches and monasteries and mission-houses.

If the Chapel of the Ascension at the north end of the village were the original building which was erected here by St. Helena in the year 326, it would dispute the claim of the Bethlehem church to be the oldest Christian house of worship in the world. But Helena’s basilica was long ago destroyed. The modern chapel is in the court of a mosque and belongs to the Moslems, who also regard it as a holy place. They allow the Christians, however, to celebrate mass here occasionally. Within the chapel is shown the footprint of Christ, which has been frequently renewed, and changed in shape and position. Of course the only indubitable fact about the chapel

is that the Gospels make it plain that the Ascension did *not* take place from anywhere near here. This site was doubtless fixed upon by the early Christians because of its magnificent outlook. Indeed, until very recently, the finest panorama of Jerusalem was that obtained from the minaret of the enclosing mosque.

Now, however, the six-story belvedere tower of the neighboring Russian monastery provides a far broader outlook. The tower itself is the most prominent structure in all Palestine; and the view from it is, in many respects, the most varied and fascinating in the world. Jerusalem lies almost directly underneath; a large part of southern Palestine can be seen with the definiteness of a map; while to the east the Wilderness of Judea drops down almost 4,000 feet to the Jordan Valley and the Dead Sea, beyond which are visible the mountains of Moab as far as Kerak, sixty miles to the southeast. The most powerful church in Palestine is the Greek Orthodox, of which the Czar is the natural protector and champion; and it is rumored around Jerusalem that the real object in erecting this lofty structure was to provide a military observation-tower for use at some nearby time, when the breaking out of the long-expected war with Turkey shall provide a pretext for still further strengthening the foothold of Russia in the Holy Land.

At the southern end of the village are a number



The Mount of Olives from St. Stephen's Gate. The tall cypress trees are in the Latin Garden of Gethsemane, opposite the nearest corner of which is the entrance to the Tomb of the Virgin



Jerusalem from the Mount of Olives. Back of the center of the long line of Moslem graves are the two closed entrances of the Golden Gate

THE MOUNT OF OLIVES

of buildings belonging to the Roman Catholic monks. The Church of the Creed is a half-subterranean structure, whose roof rises only a few feet above the ground; so that it resembles the Catholic churches which are so often seen in America, finished only as far as the top of the foundation walls, while for years services are held in what will later be the cellar or crypt of the completed building. The place where Christ is said to have taught His disciples the Lord's Prayer is marked by a really beautiful quadrangular cloister, around whose sides are marble slabs bearing the Prayer in thirty-two different languages.

It is only a few minutes' walk over the brow of the Mount of Olives to the little village of Bethany, where Christ lodged during the week before His crucifixion. But there is nothing worth seeing in Bethany, which is now an unusually squalid hamlet of forty or fifty houses, with a badly ruined mediæval fort which the natives call the "Castle of Lazarus," and the "Tomb of Lazarus," which the Moslem villagers guard very jealously. So we shall rather sit under one of the old olive trees on the western slope of the hill, and look down upon the splendid panorama which is spread out before us.

In spite of the very ancient tradition which places the Garden of Gethsemane at the bottom of the Valley of Kidron, I cannot help feeling that He who so loved Jerusalem would not have chosen for

His favorite retreat a spot down there, two hundred feet beneath the Temple Area, where nothing of the city could be seen except its grim walls and the graves beside them; but would rather have rested and prayed in some orchard like this, near the top of the hill, from which He could gaze across the narrow valley and see spread out before Him the whole city over which He yearned and the Temple whose daily offering was the prototype of His own sacrifice.

As Dean Stanley said, "No human being could be disappointed who first saw Jerusalem from the east." Right below you is the deep valley of Kidron, beyond which the Holy City lies upon its hilltop, just enough lower than the Mount of Olives so that every part of it can be easily seen, so near that each house is distinctly visible and, as it seems, purposely tilted up a little, for the greater convenience of the spectator.

The focus of the picture is the bright-colored "Dome of the Rock," which rises symmetrically in the center of the brown, level *Haram* area. Back of it and at the right are the thickly clustered, whitish domes of the city. The roofs and towers of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre can be distinguished by one who knows where to look for them; but they do not stand out so conspicuously as the minaret which marks the site of the Castle of Antonia at the north of the *Haram esh-Sherîf*, or the dark walls of the

THE MOUNT OF OLIVES

citadel by the Jaffa Gate at the farther side of the city, or the shining new steeple of the German Church which was dedicated in 1898 by the Kaiser. In front and at the left, the wall of the city rests on the hardly less precipitous side of the valley. In the distant background are the soft tints of the gently rolling hills. After the first curious glimpse, however, you do not notice the details of the panorama. Four elements make up the picture; the gray walls upon the valley's edge, the white city, the background of hills, and, standing uncrowded on the central platform, as though all the rest were only a setting for this one gem, the peerless "Dome of the Rock."

Viewed thus from the Mount of Olives, the Holy City is beautiful, even in this day of its bondage and shame. And sometimes when the morning sun rises from behind Mount Nebo and sends its first long, level ray across the wilderness to touch the dome of Omar with a flaming splendor, the watcher on Olivet is given a vision of what Jerusalem must have been in the days of its glory, when, where the Moslem mosque now stands, the golden front of the Temple flashed back the rays of the rising sun, and where the *muezzin* sings shrilly that Mohammed is the prophet of Allah, the sweet savor of the morning sacrifice rose upward to the Lord God of Israel.

XII

THE RIVER THAT GOES DOWN

DO not all rivers flow down? Yes, of course; but not so *obviously* as this one. Therefore was it named Jordan (Hebrew, *Yardên*), which means "that which goes down."

A straight line from the farthest accepted source of the Jordan to its mouth measures only 115 miles; the total length of the winding stream is somewhere between 225 and 250 miles. Yet the fall of the little Palestinian river is 3,000 feet; that is, it "goes down" farther than the Mississippi and the Volga added together, whose combined length is 4,800 miles.

The Jordan begins among the clean, fresh breezes and shaded groves and bubbling springs of the mountainside where the old nature-gods had their shrines. It ends at the lowest, hottest, dreariest spot on the whole earth. It is nowhere a navigable stream. The Jews hardly ever referred to it as the *Jordan River*. It was just "that which goes down"—the Descender—*Yardên!*

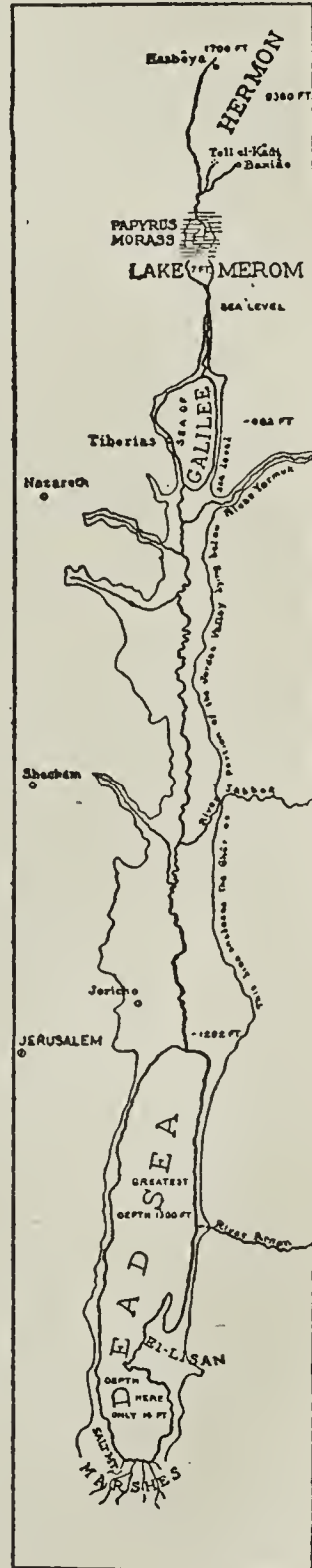
History and religion and travel have touched this strange river chiefly at three points: its source, its

THE RIVER THAT GOES DOWN

widening out into the Sea of Galilee, and its mouth at the Dead Sea.

The Jordan is the gift of Mount Hermon, whose highest peak, rising 9,380 feet above the Mediterranean, is the very top of Palestine. So the Syrians call it *Jebel esh-Sheikh*, the "Sheikh Mountain." On its southern and western slopes are three unfailing springs whose waters unite to form the sacred river.

Streams in Palestine are uncertain things. Most of them are furious torrents during the rainy season, and simply do not exist during all the rest of the year. I do not remember to have ever seen a drop of water in "cool Siloam's shady rill," and I have galloped over "Kishon's flood" without noticing it. Most maps of the Holy Land give a wrong impression of the water-courses of the country. The numerous wavy lines (broken lines on the few correct maps), which one naturally supposes to be rivers, are most of them merely valleys down which the water drains after



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a storm, but which otherwise are as dry as a bone. One small river and a half-dozen creeks are about all the summer traveler sees between Dan and Beer-sheba.

Because of this indefiniteness of Palestinian streams, the head of the Jordan is variously located at places as much as thirty miles apart. Indeed, if we include its variable tributaries, the actual length does vary almost as much as this. But its farthest perennial source is at the fountain by the village of Hasbêya, thirty-five miles north of the Sea of Galilee.

A second and much larger source is eight miles below Hasbêya, at the mound of *Tell el-Kâdi*, which is Arabic for "Hill of the Judge." *Dan* in Hebrew also meant "Judge," and this is almost certainly the location of the famous city which was so often named as the extreme northernmost settlement in Israel. The mound may have been the crater of an extinct volcano; for evidences of volcanic action are numerous in all this district around Hermon, and earthquakes are still frequent.

The *tell* is now covered with black boulders, among which grow thorn bushes and small trees, and in the springtime the banks of the stream are gorgeous with flowers and blossoming shrubs; so that the scene is one of great natural beauty, as well as religious and historic interest. The river flows out from the side of the mound and also wells up among the bushes

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at the center of the old crater. The water is absolutely clear, and is so great in volume that this must be numbered among the largest springs in the world.

The most famous and beautiful source of the Jordan, however, and the one which the Jews considered the beginning of their river, is that at Banias, where the stream bursts forth from a cavern in the mountainside and flows through a luxuriant jungle of ferns and water-plants and thick-growing shrubs, bordered by pleasant groves of oak trees and dominated by the majestic mountain slopes which rise one behind the other, up to the summit of Hermon.

It is no wonder that from time immemorial this has been a sanctuary of nature-worship. Long before the Hebrews entered Palestine, the aboriginal inhabitants worshipped here the gods of the forest and the subterranean waters, which was doubtless why Jero-boam later chose this as one of the spots to set up a golden calf. When the Greeks came, they made a grove of Daphne by the other source near Dan; and here, at the most impressive fountain of the Jordan, they found an ideal dwelling-place for their own forest-god; so they dedicated the cavern of the spring to Pan and called the region about it *Paneas*, whence (as the Syrian cannot pronounce the letter *p*) comes the modern name of Baniâs. Here Herod the Great built "a most beautiful temple of the whitest stone." Philip the Tetrarch beautified the city by the spring, and renamed it after the emperor,

Cæsarea—Cæsarea Philippi, to distinguish it from the other Cæsarea on the coast—and under this name the locality is associated with the solemn scene in the Gospel history, when Peter was promised the keys of the kingdom of heaven (Matt. 16:13ff). After the destruction of Jerusalem, Titus celebrated his victory by great gladiatorial combats at Cæsarea, during which unfortunate Jewish captives were slain by wild beasts. To-day there stands on the cliff above the spring a small shrine of the patron saint of England and popular Moslem hero, St. George.

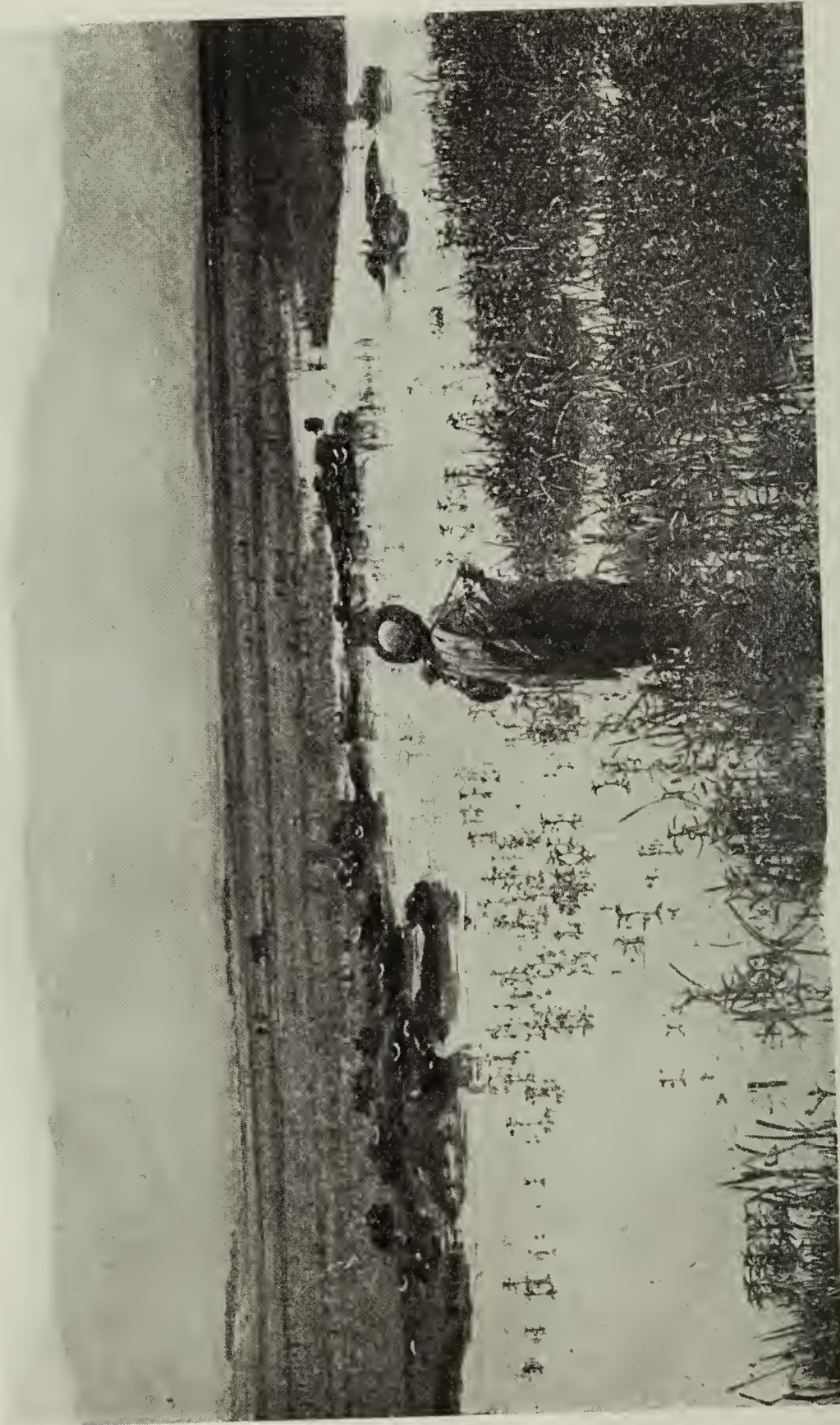
Fifteen hundred feet above the sacred fountain, on a narrow ridge bordered by dizzy precipices, rises the black bulk of a huge castle, built by the Crusaders in the year 1129, and the scene of some of the most sanguinary conflicts in all the tragic history of the Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem, until in 1165 the stronghold was captured by the great Saracen leader, Nureddin.

It would be hard to find a place which exhibits a more striking combination of historic interest, fascinating mythology, solemn religious associations and magnificence of natural surroundings than the mountain and castle and cavern and grove by the fountain of Baniâs.

Five miles to the south the three streams unite, and the full-grown river flows across the fertile plain of the *Hûleh*, much of which, however, is undrained



The source of the Jordan at *Tell el-Kâdi*, ancient Dan



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The marshes of the Hûleh, with Mount Hermon in the background

THE RIVER THAT GOES DOWN

swamp and jungle, tenanted only by wild beasts, poisonous with malaria, and subject to raids by the Bedouins from the east. The lower end of the *Hûleh* is an impenetrable morass, choked with papyrus plants, through which the Jordan meanders by innumerable channels, until it widens out into its first lake, which is a small, roundish body of water, about three miles across. This is the "Waters of Merom," where Joshua defeated the kings of the north country. They call it now the *Baheiret el-Hûleh*, or "Lakelet of the Hûleh."

When it leaves this little lake, the Jordan "goes down" indeed! It tumbles over one cascade after another, in an almost continuous succession of dizzy whirlpools and impassable rapids, and in less than ten miles it has fallen 689 feet. It is not strange that the muddy stream of this furious little river can be traced far into the Sea of Galilee; so that tradition says that the Jordan passes straight along and out again, without mingling its waters with those of the lake. In a straight line we are only thirty-five miles from the source at Hasbêya, yet the river has already "gone down" almost 2,400 feet, or a thousand feet more than the entire fall of the Mississippi.

Outside of the Jordan Valley, there is no spot on earth so low as the shores of the Sea of Galilee. We are down at the bottom of a great pit. The waves of the ocean are rolling nearly seven hundred

feet above. Yet the panorama spread before us is of a mountain lake of wondrous beauty, to which we shall return again.

The Jordan is already more than twice as low as any other river; but upon leaving the Sea of Galilee, once more it "goes down"—down through a strange gorge, of which one traveler says, "There may be something on the surface of some other planet to match the Jordan Valley: there is nothing on this. On the earth there is nothing else like this deep, this colossal ditch." Between the steep slopes of the mountains on the west and the wall-like line of precipitous mountains on the east, is *el-Ghôr*, "the Depression," a vast trench, running exactly north and south, three to four thousand feet deep and usually eight or ten miles across. In pre-historic times this was one long inland sea, extending from the Waters of Merom beyond the lower end of the Dead Sea. Through the center of this old sea-bed, the annual floods of the river have cut within the great trench of *el-Ghôr* another, narrower ditch, which is sometimes two hundred feet deeper. Down at the bottom of these gigantic steps, flows the Jordan, along a groove within a ditch within a trench. You cannot see the river itself from any distance; only its bordering jungle of small trees and underbrush, which twists and turns and writhes like a dark green serpent along the bare, brown floor of the valley.

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The Jordan might also be appropriately named the "Winder"; for its course between the Sea of Galilee and the Dead Sea is so circuitous that the sixty-five miles actual distance is trebled by the windings of the river, which sometimes twists east, west, south and even north, in the course of a few hundred yards. Yet with all its turnings, the Jordan hardly ever gets a mile away from a straight north and south line drawn along the center of the *Ghôr*.

No craft has ever sailed down this low, mysterious stream, except the boats of two or three intrepid explorers. Its swiftly flowing waters are thick with mud, and are covered with leaves and twigs and all kinds of debris. Its banks are a paradise of thick-growing trees and gorgeous flowers, and are musical with the songs of birds. The water swarms with fish. Wild beasts lurk in the thickets. Now and then the river divides into many branches, between which lie fairy-like islands; but it would mean death to dwell beneath their miasmatic foliage. From this side and from that, charming rivulets pour their spring floods into the already swollen river—rivulets whose own sources lie far below the level of the ocean.

So, on the river rushes, down and down and ever down, until at last, 1,292 feet below the surface of the Mediterranean, it discharges its now polluted stream into the clear, blue depths of the Dead Sea.

Near the mouth of the Jordan we found a man's garments laid in a neat pile by the bank. "Where has the owner gone?" we asked our Bedouin companion. "Allah knows!" he answered. "Probably he was murdered by the robbers." The little heap of clothing seemed a fitting symbol of the deathly desolation of the place.

The river which goes down!—from the splendid groves of Hermon to the slime and dreary barrenness of the poisonous Sea of Death, and all the way through the most extraordinary cleft on our earth. On exceptionally clear days it is possible to stand by the mouth of the Jordan and look straight up the valley to the far-off, faint outline of Mount Hermon, from whose fertile shoulders the river sprang.

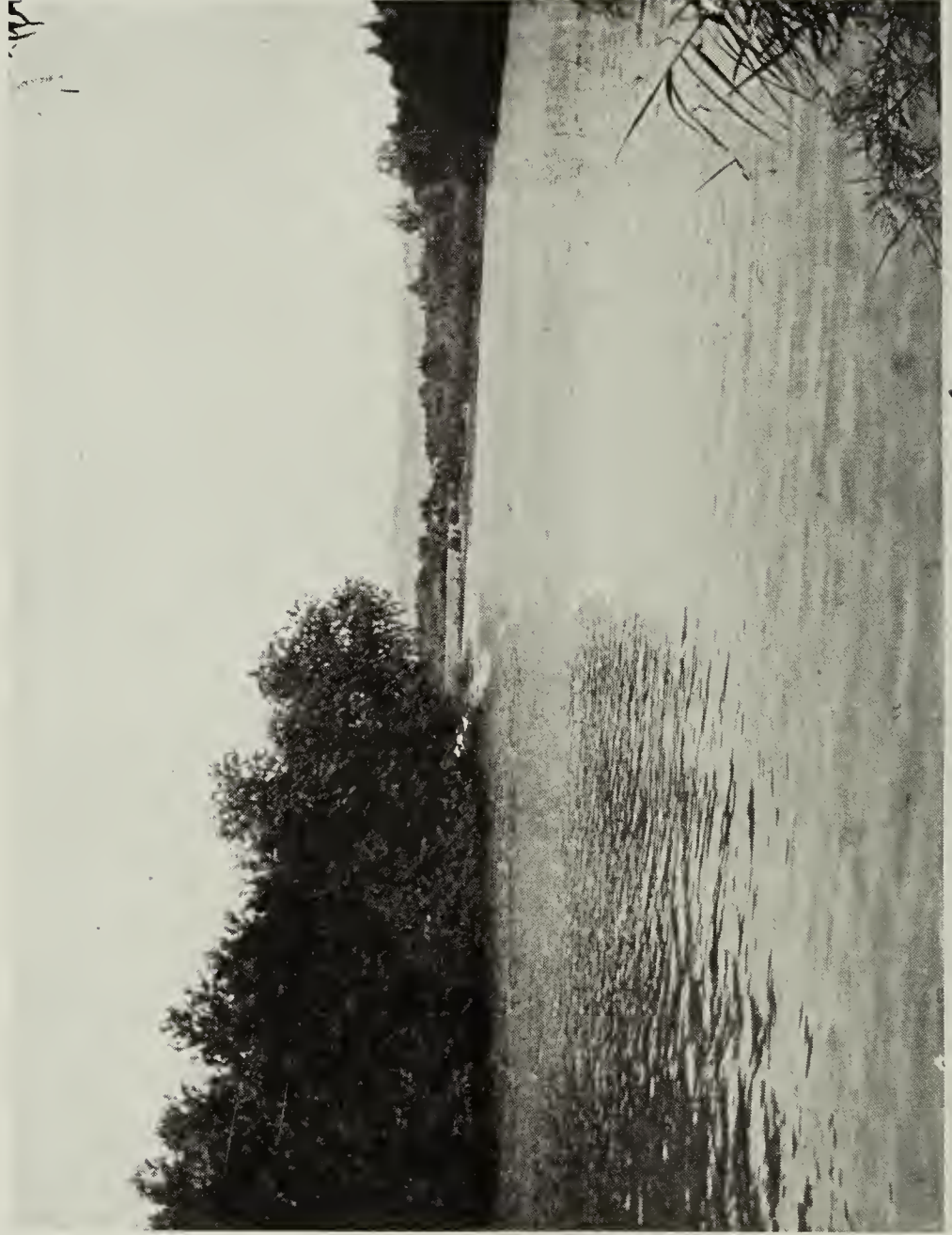
No wonder that to the Hebrews it was simply a barrier. It was Christians, not Jews, who first saw beauty and poetry in the Jordan. Those who dwelt near it seldom mention it in their literature except as a kind of great dividing line—"this side Jordan," or "beyond Jordan." That is all!

As we ride away from it, the deep rift in the mountains becomes more evident. You are never long out of sight of it, as you travel through the hill country of central Palestine. Always it is there; that straight, deep trench at the east of the Holy Land; the strangest of all valleys. Surely it was no mere geological cataclysm which dug this great moat; but a providential wisdom which shut in the



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Looking into the level plain of the *Ghôr* near Jericho, where the
Jordan Valley is the widest



The Jordan River near the Pilgrims' Bathing Place

THE RIVER THAT GOES DOWN

Hebrews to their own tiny land among the hilltops, so that there, in enforced separateness from the heathen empires round about them, they might develop their unique insight into spiritual truth.

XIII

THE SEA OF DEATH

“THIS awful hollow, this bit of the infernal regions come up to the surface, this hell with the sun shining into it”—so one traveler characterizes the basin of the Dead Sea.

I am glad that my first visit was in mid-summer, when this hottest, most unhealthful region of the inhabited world was at its superlative, inimitable worst. Indeed, it gives a wrong impression to speak of the district as “inhabited”; for, except during the harvest season, when the villagers from the neighboring hills come down to reap their grain, the Jordan Valley north of the Dead Sea is so still and lonely that the sound of a human foot-fall makes your heart jump with mingled curiosity and apprehension.

The Jericho of Old Testament days is a ruin; the Roman Jericho is a ruin; the third and modern town is a mass of hot, filthy hovels on the edge of the valley, whose two or three hundred inhabitants are sickly and listless and degenerate. The babies have emaciated limbs and swollen bodies, like the children of a famine district. The grown people are burnt

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almost as black as negroes by the terrible *Ghôr* sun, and are of a mongrel Arab blood, despised by the true Bedouins, and notorious for their laziness and dishonesty and the licentiousness of their women. The last trait is very rare among pure Arabs. We are reminded that the three inhabitants of Jericho mentioned by name in the Bible were a harlot, a beggar, and a dishonest tax-gatherer.

Herod the Great laid a further curse upon Jericho (the Roman city, of course) by choosing it for one of his favorite residences. He built a castle here and an amphitheatre and several palaces, and here he perished of an indescribably loathsome disease. Five days earlier, he had raised his head from his sick-bed to order the execution of his own son. As the last important act of his infamous career, the dying madman ordered a thousand of the chief men of the Jewish people to be shut up in the amphitheatre, and gave orders (which, however, were mercifully disregarded) that immediately upon his decease, all these should be massacred, in order that, as he said, even the nation which hated him should have cause to lament upon the day of his death. Then, selfish and murderous to the last, the foul soul of the tyrant left Jericho for its own place.

After a sleepless night—for a burning sirocco was blowing and the temperature of our bedroom must have been at least 100 degrees—we breakfasted at half-past three in the morning, and shortly after-

wards drove off to the ford of the Jordan, six miles to the east of Jericho. Even in the grey light of the early dawn, it was an insufferably hot and uninteresting journey, excepting when we bumped over the edge of the inner trench into the old bed of the river, where its ancient meanderings through the soft marl had sculptured strangely artificial-looking castles and walls and monuments. Then the carriage nearly upset as it slid down the bank of still another channel, which was cut in more recent times, and is still sometimes filled by the spring floods. Last of all we came to a dense thicket, which completely hid the river from view until we stood on its muddy banks.

Opposite Jericho the Jordan is about a hundred and fifty feet across; and in spite of the muddiness of the water, there are many charming views up the winding stream, between the thick, overhanging foliage which lines it on either side.

There are numerous fords along the lower course of the river. One of these is regarded as the place of Christ's baptism, and consequently at Easter-time it is thronged with pilgrims who come down from Jerusalem to bathe in the sacred river. Great personages frequently come here from distant countries, attended by their chaplains, to be baptized in the Jordan. Bottles of the water are carried away as relics, or to be used for important ceremonies in the churches of Europe. A syndicate was recently

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formed with the object of exporting hogsheads of the water to America, where presumably it was to be disposed of at a large price for the christening of the children of wealthy parents; but, so far as I know, the venture has not been a success.

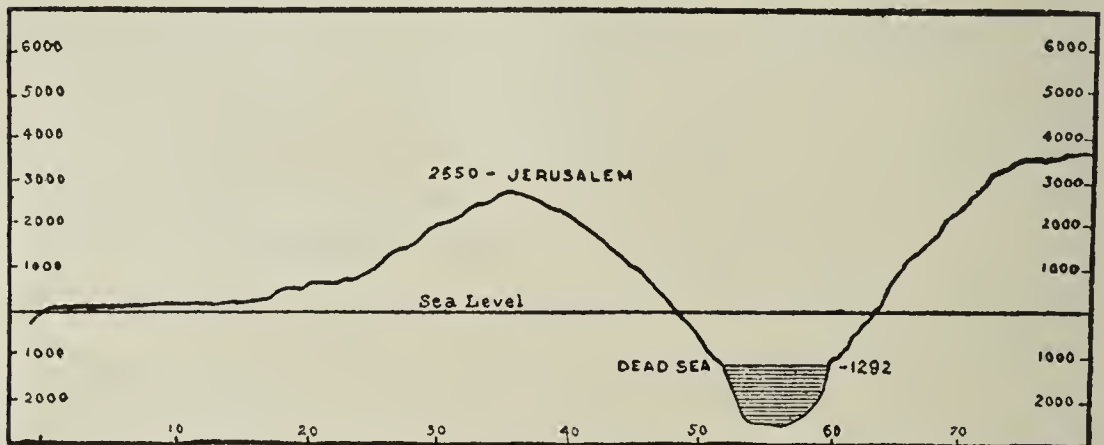
Between the fords, the river is often quite deep. In the driest month of the year, I swam down twelve or fifteen feet under water without reaching bottom: I was afraid to go deeper, on account of the danger of being entangled in the roots and water-plants. Even so far from the source and where the fall of the river is least, the current is very powerful. We had been bathing in the Mediterranean eight months in the year and felt quite at home in deep water; but the strongest swimmer in our party said that he would rather not try to cross this narrow river. Those of us who did try it found the effort quite exhausting, and one man had to rest fifteen minutes on "the other side of Jordan" before he felt equal to the swim back.

Six or seven miles below this ford, the river empties into the Dead Sea. We reached its shore just at sunrise—a glorious sunrise of purple and gold, which nevertheless, in this great oven of a valley, reminded us of nothing so much as the flames playing above the coals of a furnace.

The people who lived near it never called this the "Dead Sea." To the Hebrews it was the "Salt Sea," or the "Eastern Sea." In Roman times it was

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known as the "Asphalt Lake," from the deposits of bitumen which are found by its shores. The Arabs call it *Bahr Lût*, "the Sea of Lot"; for Mohammed introduced into the Koran the story of Lot and Sodom.

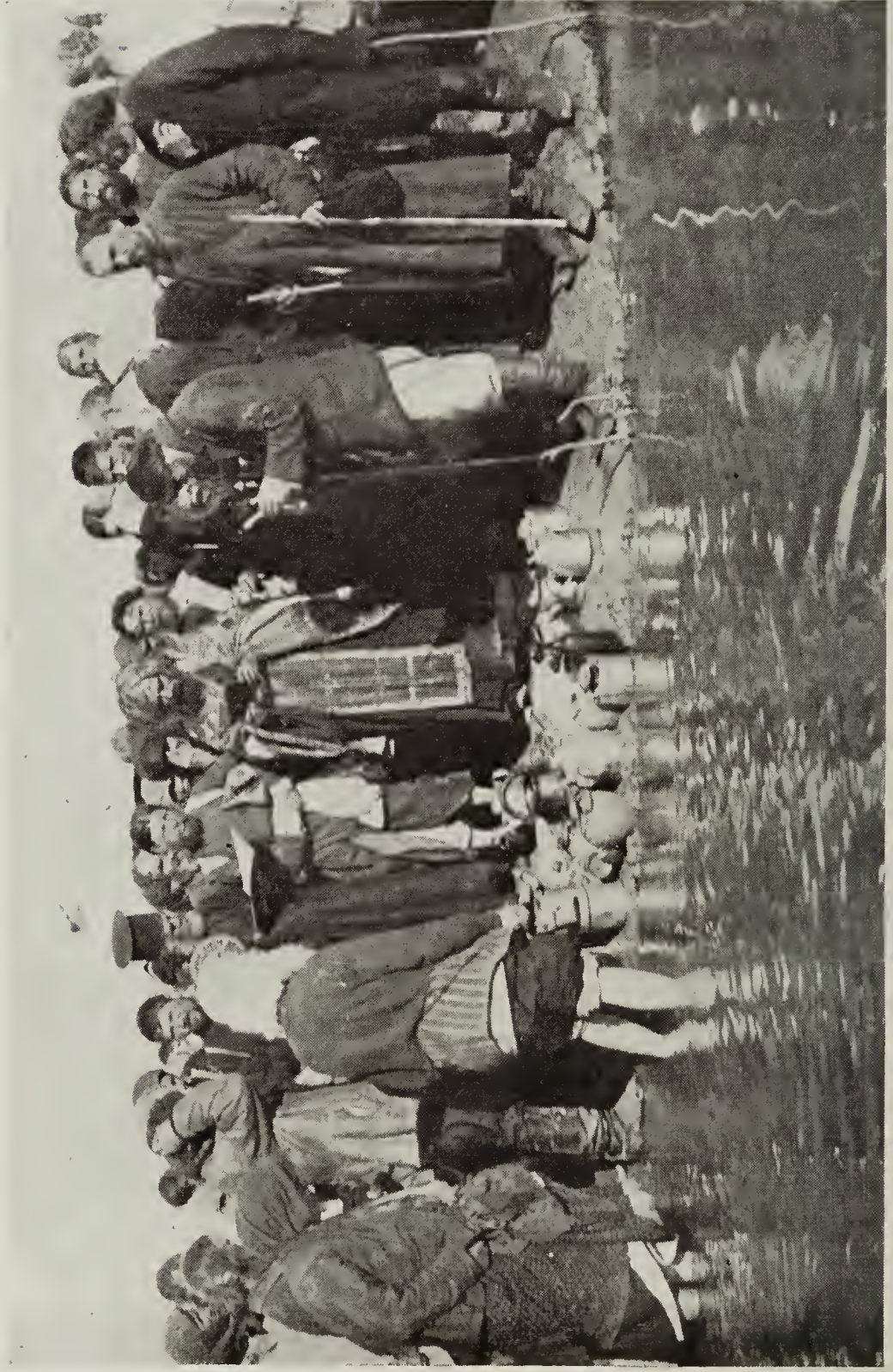


A cross-section of Southern Palestine. The horizontal distances are in miles; vertical, in feet

The northern two-thirds of the sea is very deep, the mean depth of this portion being over 1,000 feet and the greatest, 1,310 feet; but below the low, white peninsula of the *Lisân*, or "Tongue," the water grows suddenly very shallow and is nowhere more than about fourteen feet deep. Because of this fact, and also because of the great number of salt pinnacles near the southern bay, many scholars think that the ancient "Cities of the Plain" were in what is now this shallow portion of the Dead Sea, and that a subsidence of land accompanying the other phenomena at the time of the destruction of Sodom and



Inhabitants of modern Jericho



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Russian pilgrims at the Jordan

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Gomorrah caused the water of the sea to extend southwards over the ruins of the fallen cities.

The rapid current of the Jordan carries down 6,500,000 tons of water each day, all of which must be taken up by evaporation, as the Dead Sea has no outlet, and yet its level remains approximately the same. Consequently the water is impregnated to an unusual extent with mineral substances. It has 26 per cent. of solid matter in solution, as compared with the ocean's 4 to 6 per cent. Sulphur and petroleum springs are found near its shores, and presumably also in the sea bottom. Besides chloride of sodium (table salt), the water contains chlorides of calcium and magnesium. The former makes the water feel smooth and oily; the latter gives to it a nauseating and bitter taste. Indeed, the bitter, oily taste is more noticeable than the saltiness.

Of course no one can drink this terrible fluid. Even swimming in it irritates the skin, and if it touches the eyes or nostrils or a half-healed scratch, it causes the most exquisite pain. Bathing in the Dead Sea is a memorable experience, however, because the specific gravity of the water is so great that it is simply impossible for a person to sink. You can walk along in the water with your head and shoulders above the surface, or lie back, as if in a hammock, and read or smoke with perfect ease. I saw a young Russian, who could not swim a stroke, floundering around away out from shore, where the

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sea must have been hundreds of feet deep, for all the world like a child in a hay-mow.

The Dead Sea is forty-seven miles long and nine or ten miles wide; that is, it is just about the size of Lake Geneva; but where the Swiss lake is overlooked by green pastures and shady groves and bordered by prosperous cities, the great lake of Palestine is surrounded by dry, salty desolation. Nevertheless the Dead Sea is beautiful. A French explorer calls it "the most imposing and beautiful lake which exists on the earth." From a distance its waters are the deepest, most incredible blue; nearby they are of a wonderful transparency, so that at a depth of twenty or thirty feet the stones at the bottom are distinctly seen. Except at the southern end, its shores are covered with dazzling white pebbles and sand; on either side high mountains rise above it; and overhead is the glorious Judean sky.

But its beauty is the beauty of death. No vegetable life is found along its shores, except heaps of drift-wood carried down by the river, which are stripped and bleached like bones and incrustated with a layer of salt. No flocks graze beside it, no wild beasts come hither to drink, no fish swim in its depths—though, indeed, I have seen thousands of Jordan fish floating near the surface of the sea whose poisonous waters had killed them. No life of any kind is found in or near it, except perhaps a few

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deadly microbes. The Arabs say that even the birds will not fly over it.

It is a nightmare lake, full of marvels; but they are all marvels of a dead, hot, thirsty desolation. Cakes of hard black asphalt rise up from its depths when loosened by storms or earthquakes. At the southern end are almost impassable bogs—the “slime pits” where the armies of Sodom and Gomorrah were overwhelmed (Genesis 14:10). Here too is a mountain of pure rock-salt, six hundred feet high and seven miles long; and a cliff of solid flint a thousand feet high. And here grow the “Apples of Sodom”; beautiful orange-like fruits which, when dead ripe, crumble away in the hand like ashes.

On the western side of the Dead Sea are an oasis and a ruined castle, both of which are worth visiting, though both are touched with the tragedy which seems to grip everything that even overlooks this valley of death.

The oasis is at Engedi, “the Spring of the Kid,” half-way down the lake. Here David hid from Saul “upon the rocks of the wild goats” (I Samuel 24:1); and here, many years later, Jehoshaphat slaughtered the invading army from beyond Jordan (II Samuel 20). Between the Salt Sea and the precipitous cliffs of the Judean Wilderness is a fertile wedge of land, watered by a generous stream, which bursts from a warm spring in the rocks and rushes down in noisy cascades to the sea four hundred feet below. In

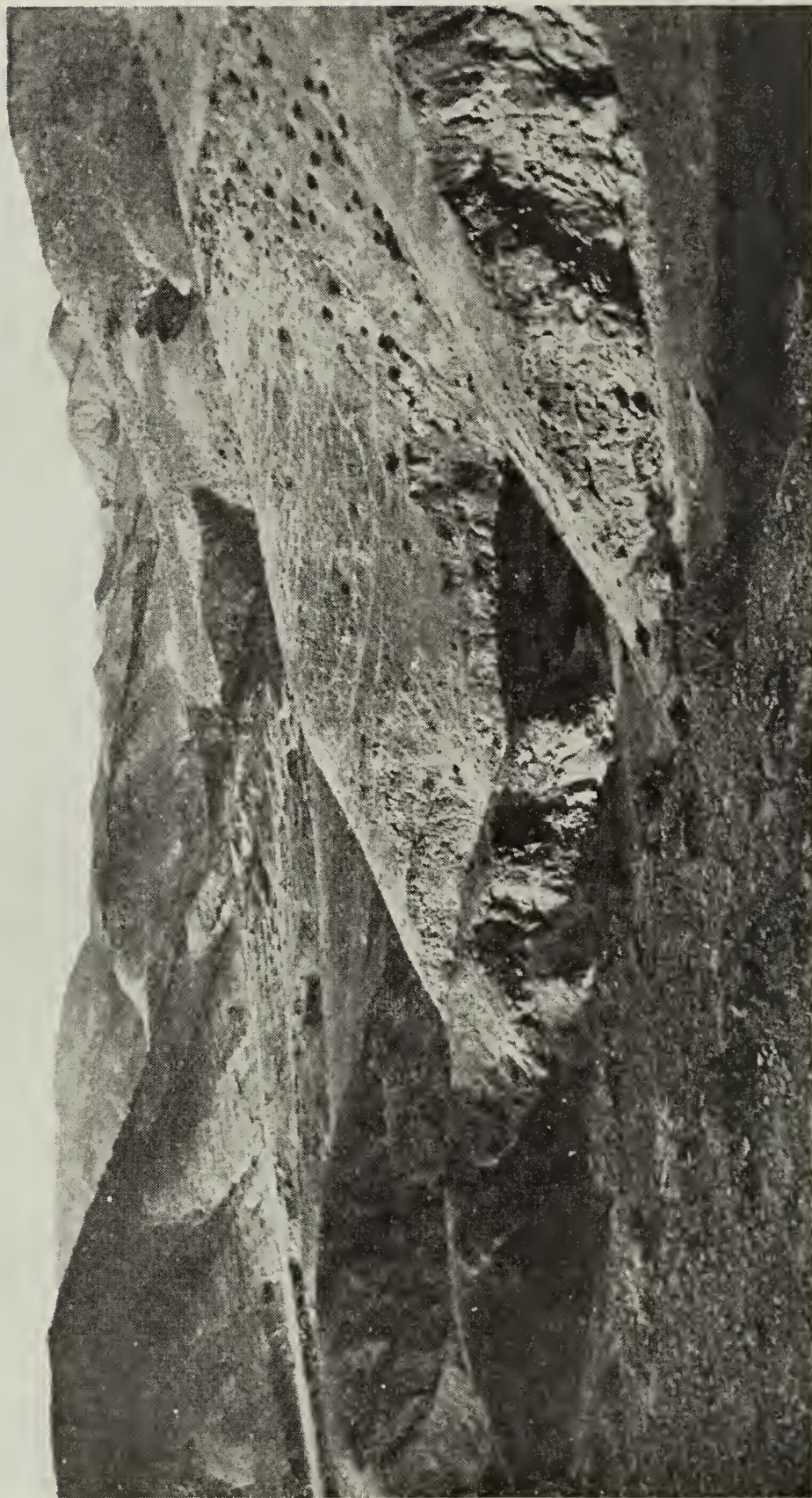
spite of the unusual fertility, this is one of the wildest, loneliest spots in all Palestine, tenanted chiefly by the wild goats which gave to the locality its ancient name.

A little way south of Engedi there projects into the sea an almost inaccessible promontory two thousand feet high, upon whose summit are the ruins of the Castle of Masada, whose walls rise from the very brink of the precipice. It was here, in these lonely, desolate surroundings, that there occurred the final tragic act in the drama of Jewish national history. After Jerusalem had been captured by Titus in 70 A. D., the last survivors of the garrison fled with their women and children to this remote fortress, which they stubbornly defended against the Roman besiegers. But at last a breach was made in the outer fortifications, and the Jews were shut up within a hastily constructed inner rampart of wood and earth. Then the dauntless commander Eleazar prevailed upon his unfortunate compatriots that, rather than yield to the Romans, they should die by their own hands.* So each man killed his own wife and children. "Nor was there at length any one of these men found that scrupled to act his part in this terrible execution, but every one of them dispatched his dearest relations. . . . They then chose ten men by lot out of them, to slay all the rest

* Josephus, *Wars of the Jews*, Book vii, chapters 8-9.



The northern shore of the Dead Sea



The Wilderness of Judea

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and when these ten had, without fear, slain them all, they made the same rule for casting lots for themselves, that he whose lot it was should first kill the other nine, and after all, should kill himself." Of the entire garrison of Masada there survived only two women and five children, who had hidden in a cave under the castle.

So when next morning the Roman army ascended the steep cliff for the final assault upon the fortress, they found only smouldering ruins and the bodies of the nine hundred and sixty heroes who had made the last brave, hopeless stand for Jewish independence on the rocky promontory which looks out upon the Sea of Death.

XIV

THE BACKBONE OF PALESTINE

ALTHOUGH the long contemplated road to Nazareth is at last completed, there is still only one really satisfactory way to travel up-country from Jerusalem. That is, of course, on horseback. It is hard to enter into the spirit of Palestine from the seat of a carriage. On the other hand, pedestrianism is not advisable for the Western visitor; for he will not quickly recuperate from the fatigue of over-exertion under the burning sun; so the pleasure of the trip will be spoiled and, in his weakened condition, he may come down with a fever.

Besides two quite passable hotels on the European plan, there are four kinds of accommodations for the three nights which the rider usually spends between Jerusalem and Nazareth. You can sleep in your own tent, a native *khan*, a monastery, or the home of a missionary. The first is the most expensive, and most out of touch with the real life of the country. The last is an imposition upon busy and underpaid people, of which you should be guilty only under very exceptional circumstances, unless, indeed, you are willing to lodge strangers over-night in your own home in America.

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I have stayed in a good many Syrian *khans*—when I could not help it. The first thing you do after arrival is to sit on the edge of the manger and smoke, while your horse is being fed. The reason why you stay there in the stable is because otherwise the oats you have paid for would be stolen from under the poor animal's nose. And it is better to smoke, because tobacco smoke does not smell so bad as some other things. Then your host conducts you to the chamber of honor—if there is one. In many of the *khans* there are no sleeping-rooms at all; for the muleteers and camel-drivers are content to roll up in their blankets and spend the night on the stable floor, or perhaps on a large raised platform which is provided for that purpose.

The first time I slept at the *khan* at Jenîn (ancient Engannim), on the edge of the Plain of Esdraelon, we were given a little upper room, like a small house built on the flat roof of the main building; doubtless the same kind of a guest-chamber which the widow of Shunem built for the prophet Elisha. The furniture consisted of four very rickety and very dirty beds, one broken-down chair, a little wooden bench with two jugs of water on it, a smoky lamp, and a piece of dark, stony substance which was said to be soap. But by the time we had washed the soap, there was not enough of it left to wash ourselves with; so our evening ablutions were performed by cautiously pouring our scanty supply of water over each other's

hands, in the time-honored Oriental manner. As our muleteer threw the saddle-bags on the floor he turned to us with a grin and said, "Fine room! Cook's Hotel!"

We gave him a *bishlik* (eleven cents), and told him to go to the bazaar and buy us some supper. He came back with a big bundle of bread and cheese which lasted the two of us for three meals. Even counting the price of the coffee from the *khan*, and of a can of sardines left over from lunch, our meal cost us only about four cents apiece. After supper we sat out on the flat roof for half an hour in the moonlight. Any Syrian town looks beautiful after dark. Then we rubbed vaseline on our sunburns and tumbled into bed—with our clothes on, for obvious reasons—and in spite of the fact that all the window panes were broken and somebody had told the mosquitoes of our arrival, we slept a solid ten hours.

The next time I passed through Jenîn, we were given a tiny pavilion in the center of the orchard back of the *khan*. Here the surroundings were really most romantic. No sign of human life was visible. Only the hum and buzz and chirp of a hundred thousand insects shattered the dead stillness of the night. Between the deep shadows of the old olive trees, the bright moonlight streamed upon the flowers growing beneath in wild profusion. But our garden pavilion was more of a ruin than the chamber on the roof of the *khan*. The door was gone and the shutters of

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the windows swung on one hinge; so when towards midnight we heard a number of drunken muleteers carousing at the farther end of the orchard, we moved our four-poster beds up against the openings of the pavilion, in such a way that we should be quickly aroused by any intruders. This time we were more extravagant and spent a *bishlik* apiece for a very large course dinner, consisting of rice stew, mutton stew, bean stew, tomato stew, and I know not how many stews besides. While we were eating, our lamp attracted attention, and, with one accord, all the insects in the orchard stopped buzzing and came in to welcome us. But poor food and dirty beds and insect pests and drunken neighbors are powerless to disturb the peaceful slumbers of those who have ridden all day in the brisk, fresh air of the uplands of Palestine.

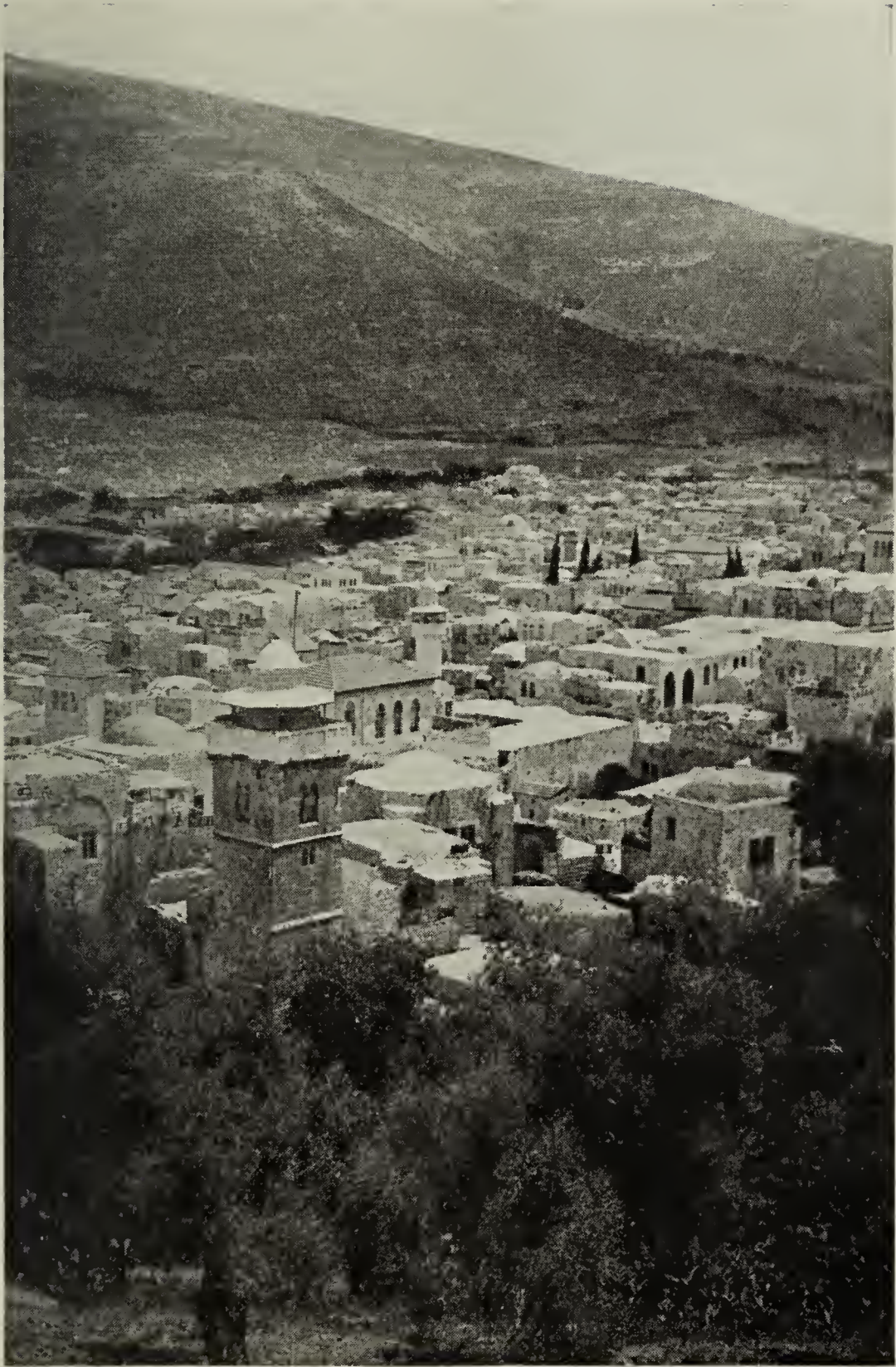
It is seldom, however, that the traveler need sleep at native *khans*. Ordinarily he can plan his journey so as to spend each night at one of the numerous monasteries which make a business of entertaining strangers. These seldom have any fixed charge. I usually pay a *medjedie* (eighty-five cents) for supper, bed and breakfast for myself and horse.

As a rule these monasteries are clean and comfortable, and provide good food as well as satisfactory lodging. The buildings are always forbidding stone structures, built so as to stand a siege, if need be. Around the inner court, with its pebble walks

and central cistern, are cloisters from which open the living and sleeping-rooms; or, in the case of a large monastery, the bedrooms will open from an upper gallery. The surroundings are quiet and peaceful, the beds have the necessary mosquito-nets, the food is good in quality and often elaborate in variety. I had an eight-course dinner at the Franciscan monastery at Shechem. And if you talk French or Arabic, the monks are only too glad to sit down for an after-dinner chat with you.

There are three views which repeat themselves again and again as you ride along the central range of Palestine: the valley, the ravine, and the panorama from the mountaintop.

The first you see with increasing frequency as you pass from the rather barren pasture land of Judea to the richer farming country of Samaria. You ride along a long, narrow meadow, like the bed of an ancient lake—which doubtless it was. On each side are the steep hills, whose rocky sides are only sparsely covered with small, stunted trees and scrubby bushes; but the valley between is one level, apparently unbroken mass of velvety green, dotted here and there with brilliant clumps of wild flowers. No brooks wander through these meadows. Their moisture comes from the winter rains. No farm houses are seen. It is not safe for the peasants to dwell alone; so they live in compact villages a little



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Shechem and Mount Ebal



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The Samaritan high priest and the famous roll of the Pentateuch

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way up the hillsides by the springs, and come down each day to the valley to work their fields, except just at the harvest time, when they camp out in little booths made of leafy boughs, lest their ripe grain should be prematurely garnered by some midnight robber. So there is nothing to break the soft, quiet monotony of the warm valley cuddled there between the surrounding hills.

Suddenly the meadow turns sharply and ends in a narrow, winding ravine, whose stony bottom, cluttered with tremendous boulders, shows the marks of the torrential flow of the rainy season. There may be an insecure bridle-path along one side of the bed of the *wâdi*, or you may have to ride up the dry river-bed itself. Your horse stumbles over the rounded stones at almost every step; but you need not worry; he is used to these rough roads, and will not fall. On the right hand and the left the almost precipitous hillside is untidily covered with tough, thorny bushes, which often scratch you as you ride between them on the narrow trail. There is no wind down here between the hills, and the stones underfoot are almost as hot as the sun overhead. You can never make out the path for more than a few rods ahead; then it turns around some rocky shoulder, or is lost in a tangle of underbrush. Sometimes the road is as steep as a stairway and, unless you are a seasoned traveler, you tire yourself out trying to help the horse climb over the huge blocks of

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fallen limestone. You hope that each new turn in the twisting ravine will be the last; but you are so often disappointed that at last you come to feel as if all Palestine were one narrow, steep, hot, endless cleft in the rocks.

Then, all of a sudden, you are out on the top of the world. You take off your helmet to let the cool breeze blow through your matted hair, and gulp in great breaths of the delicious mountain air. The ravine up which you have been traveling is already hidden in the bushes. You would have hard work to find it again. Overhead is an illimitable expanse of the clearest, cleanest air, with feathery clouds gently floating eastward from the sea through the dark, rich blue of the sky. Bright-colored flowers grow among the rocks of the hilltop, and scrub oaks and cactus bushes. Farther down, the slopes are terraced in innumerable narrow platforms, each of which bears one or two long, curving rows of orchard trees. All about you are rounded mountain summits, with soft, level grain fields between them. On spurs of the hills which project into the valleys are clusters of tiny, gray-white houses. Especially at the east there are mountains and mountains and more mountains. Then suddenly they stop, and you fairly feel the unseen drop where Palestine falls down into the Jordan Valley, beyond which is the bluish wall of the plateau of Gilead. At the west there is one place where a break between the hills shows a tiny

THE BACKBONE OF PALESTINE

triangle of the Mediterranean, which shines dark blue or gray or golden, according to the height of the sun. And away off to the north is the faint outline of Mount Hermon.

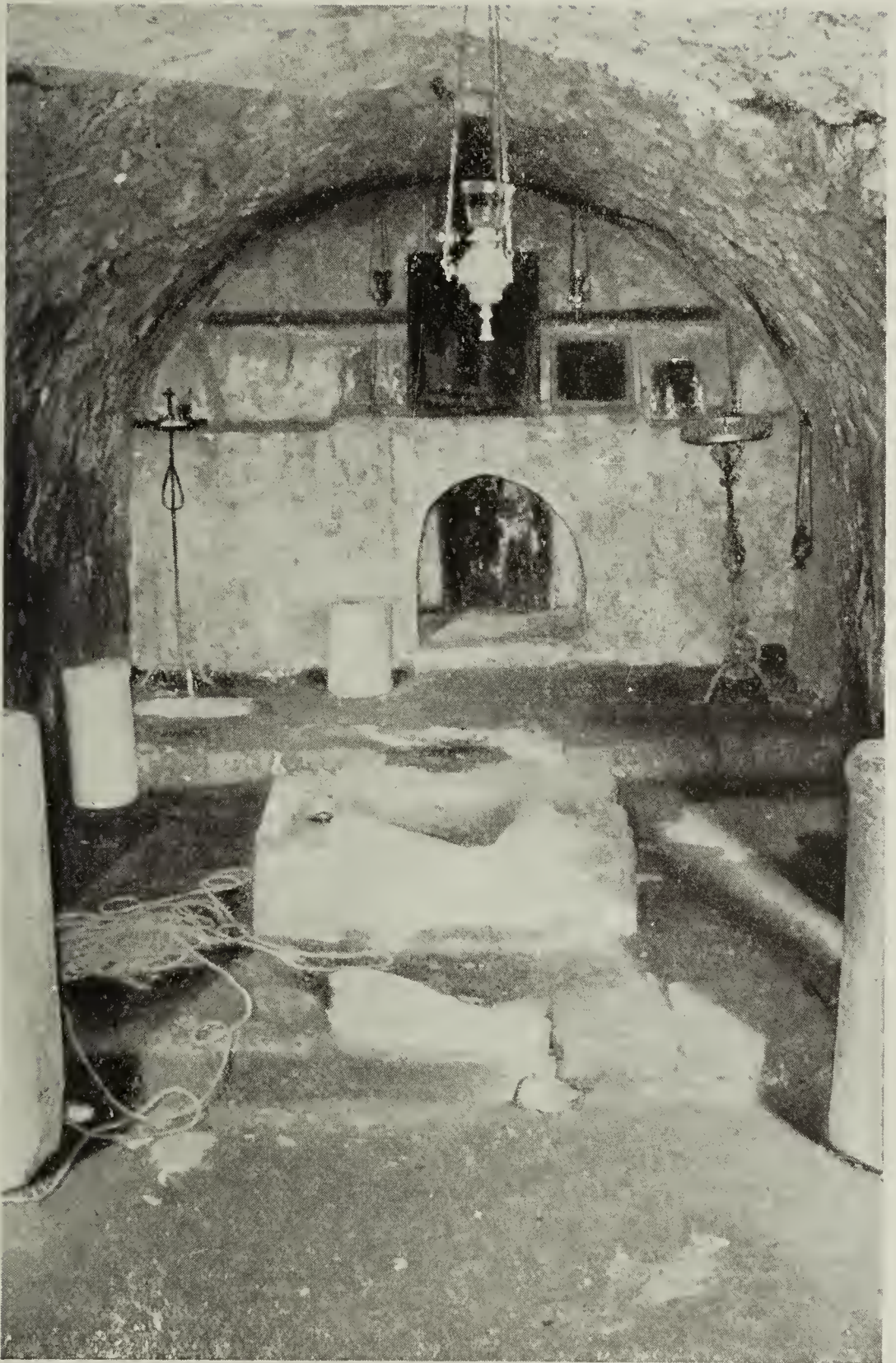
The center of Palestine geographically, and in many respects the center historically and religiously, is the city of Shechem, which lies in the transverse valley which cuts across the highlands of Samaria from east to west between Mount Gerizim and Mount Ebal. The city is built upon a kind of ridge or "shoulder," which stretches across the narrow valley from mountain to mountain; hence its ancient name of Shechem or "the Shoulder." It has been known for the last nineteen centuries as Nâblus (*i.e.*, *Neapolis*) or "New-town."

The "Vale of Shechem" is exceedingly fertile. Where Jerusalem has no natural springs at all, Nâblus boasts of twenty-two never-failing fountains. There is an elaborate system of irrigation; but at certain seasons of the year there is such an over-supply of water that it is actually let run to waste through the city streets, which are sometimes dangerous for horses, on account of the floods rushing over the slippery stones. In all my travels through Syria and Palestine I remember only three cities where there was a visible abundance of water: Damascus, Ba'albek and Shechem; and of these, only the last is within the limits of the ancient Land of Israel.

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The whole valley around Shechem is crowded with a luxuriant growth of orchards and vineyards. In the town itself there are a number of manufactories of olive-oil soap. It is the only place in Palestine where I have been awakened at five o'clock in the morning by the shrill blast of a factory whistle. Outside of Jerusalem, which is a show-place rather than a self-sustaining community, Shechem is the largest city in the Holy Land, and its surroundings are by far the most attractive.

In historical interest too, Shechem is a rival of the Holy City. Here was the oak of Moreh, where Abraham worshipped; and an increasing number of scholars believe that the Samaritans are right in maintaining that not at Jerusalem but at Gerizim was Mount Moriah, where Abraham would have sacrificed Isaac. Here Jacob dwelt and here Joseph was buried. Here the curses of the Law were read from Ebal, and the blessings from Gerizim, while the assembled Tribes of Israel in the narrow valley between shouted the loud "Amen!" Here the rebel Abimelech was crowned king. Here also Rehoboam was crowned and here, only a brief time afterward, Jeroboam set up the first court of the rival Northern Kingdom. Here, after the Exile, was the chief colony of the "Samaritans," that strange, mongrel, lonely people from Mesopotamia, who were settled in Palestine by the Assyrian conqueror, who apparently intermarried for a while with the Hebrew



Jacob's Well



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The village of Samaria and the tree-clad summit where stood the ancient capital

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residents and picked up some few teachings of the Hebrew religion and set up a rival to the Jerusalem temple on their own holy mountain, Gerizim; and yet were always despised by the orthodox Jews, whose contempt they reciprocated with a bitter, sullen hatred.

The inhabitants of the modern city number some 24,000, and are nearly all Moslems, who are almost as fanatical and turbulent as those in Hebron. I have seldom felt myself more of an unwelcomed intruder than when riding through the sullen crowd in the Nâblus bazaar. It is not a pleasant place for the stranger to stroll about after dark.

Of the old Samaritan sect, only a few survive. There are now fewer than two hundred of them, and their number is rapidly decreasing. Another generation or two will doubtless see the end of them. But they will die game. They are as proud and exclusive and stubborn as ever. They marry their own boys to their own girls—there are pathetically few of either. They wear their own distinctive dress. They jealously guard their own Bible—a copy of the Pentateuch, which they believe to have been written by Abishua, the grandson of Aaron. And on the summit of Gerizim, by the ruins of their ancient temple, they celebrate the Passover and the other ancient feasts with sacrifices and elaborate ceremonies, in strict accordance with the Mosaic ritual.

At the eastern end of the Valley of Shechem, two

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miles from the city, is a sacred place which is unique among the myriad of reputed and disputed sites in the Holy Land; for "Jacob's Well" is the only particular spot which is indisputably identified with the life of Jesus of Nazareth. We know, of course, that He was born somewhere in Bethlehem, and visited in some houses in Capernaum, and prayed in some garden on the Mount of Olives, and died somewhere outside the walls of Jerusalem. But scholars of all religions and sects, Eastern and Western, Catholic and Protestant and Jewish and Samaritan and Moslem, agree that He sat here—perhaps on this very well-curb—while He talked with the woman of Samaria about the water of life.

The surrounding parcel of land is now owned by the Greeks, who have enclosed it with a rough stone wall. Over the well itself is built a small, dark vault, some fifteen feet square, and lying more than half underground. This tomb-like structure is crudely fitted up as a chapel, with a few hanging lamps and ornamental candlesticks and sacred pictures, and broken fragments of columns from the church which was built here in the fourth century.

The well-curb is a single piece of stone, very old and worn, which rises a foot above the floor of the vault. For a small fee, the priest will let down a candle so that you can see the interior of the well. It is deep, as the woman of Samaria said, though it is not so deep now as it was then. The great mass of

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rubbish which has fallen into it, and the innumerable stones which have been dropped by centuries of curious pilgrims, have raised the bottom so that it is now only seventy-five feet below the surface of the valley. Twelve hundred years ago a Mohammedan visitor estimated the depth as two hundred and forty feet. He may have somewhat exaggerated; but at any rate, the well is not nearly so deep as it used to be, and during the dry summer months, the water at the bottom does not now rise above the accumulated rubbish.

As we come out from the gloom of the chapel over the well, we see, half a mile to the north, the dazzling white walls of "Joseph's Tomb," which reflect the rays of the sun almost as brightly as a heliograph. Joseph was doubtless buried somewhere nearby; but this building is a modern Moslem structure which is not worth visiting. Such *welis*, or tombs of holy men, are typical features of the landscape, and are seen shining on almost every conspicuous summit of the country. They usually consist of a rectangular, block-like structure, surmounted by a small dome; and when one is seen rising all alone on the very top of some round, bare, isolated hill, it looks so much like an observatory that you cannot help wishing that there were indeed a telescope set up there in the clear, dry atmosphere.

Another memorable feature of Samaria is the countless multitude of caves in the soft limestone

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rock. Indeed there are caves all over Palestine, literally tens of thousands of them, ranging in size all the way from single tomb-like chambers to immense natural catacombs like the "Cave of Adullam" in the wilderness south of Jerusalem. In Samaria the landscape is fairly dotted with dark, mysterious openings between the boulders, so that we are continually reminded of how the fugitive prophets of Israel hid in "mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth."

Ten miles northwest of Shechem lies the other great, historic stronghold of central Palestine, the city of Samaria. But where Shechem is a busy, modern city in a narrow valley, Samaria is a squalid village among imposing ruins on an isolated hilltop. They call it now Sebastîyeh, from the Greek *Sebaste*, "Augustus."

The situation of Samaria is very beautiful, in a quiet, peaceful way. In the center of a fertile basin among the mountains, rises a single rounded, terraced hill, about three hundred feet high, which must have been almost impregnable before the invention of gunpowder. Upon its summit stood the luxurious capital which Isaiah well named "the crown of pride" of the Northern Kingdom, the "flower of his glorious beauty, which is on the head of the fat valley." To this day, the circle of surrounding valleys is "fat" with olive orchards, the hillsides beyond are covered with grape vines and wild flowers, and from the

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western end of the city is one of the most charming views in Palestine, over the nearest hills and then down through the distant vales to the Mediterranean Sea. Doubtless Queen Jezebel often looked out from Ahab's palace in Samaria with homesick longing for the Great Sea whose waves beat upon the coast of her own native Phœnicia.

This stronghold within sight of the sea has been more often in the grip of heathen masters and heathen faiths than any other large city in the Holy Land. Its important history begins with Ahab and Jezebel, who built here a temple of Baal; it ends with Herod the Great, who built here a temple to Augustus Caesar, and who murdered here his own wife and two of his sons. Difficult as Samaria is to be taken by assault, it has been starved out again and again. Its history is a monotonous and sickening succession of sieges and razings and massacres, followed by the rebuilding and embellishing of a new city by the conqueror. Herod the Great not only fortified Samaria, but erected upon it a palace and a temple and a race course and a magnificent colonnade which ran entirely around the hill, just below its summit.

These columns of Herod are the most prominent objects on the hill to-day. Some are still standing in their original position beside the road. Many are built into the low walls which separate the little fields of the villagers. Others buttress the terraces and border the paths. A multitude lie where they have

stopped rolling down the hill, broken and weathered and half-covered with earth. Carved sarcophagi are also seen here and there; and heavy foundations of long vanished buildings. Samaria is a veritable rubbish-heap of broken stones and fallen pillars and crumbled masonry and whitish dust. The houses of the tiny modern settlement at the east end of the hill are built on rubbish and seem to be built *of* rubbish. The city of Jezebel and Herod, for all its matchless situation and the surrounding fertility, has become a desolate ruin, even as it was foretold by the prophet Micah,

“I will make Samaria as a heap of the field,
And as places for planting vineyards;
And I will pour down the stones thereof into
the valley,
And I will uncover the foundations thereof.”

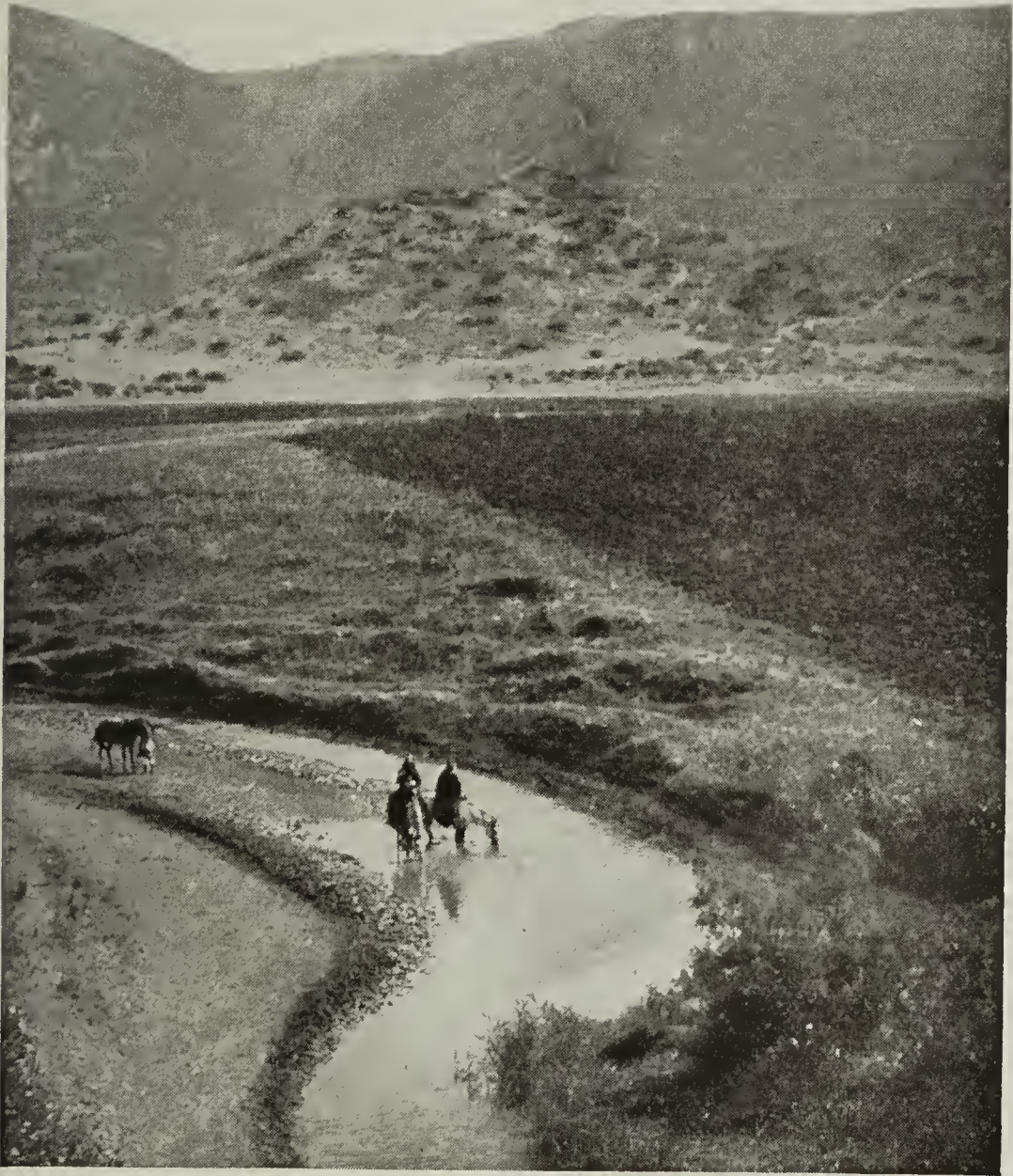
THE WAR-PATH OF THE EMPIRES

BETWEEN Samaria and Galilee the central mountain range of Palestine is cut through from east to west, as if a tremendous trowel had scooped out all the hills and then, turning over southward, had emptied its load to form Mount Carmel. This triangular leveled area is the Plain of Jezreel, or Megiddo, or Esdraelon, or the "Great Plain"; a kind of broad channel separating Galilee from Samaria as effectually as the English Channel separates Great Britain from France, and, like the English Channel, a highway for the world's commerce.

Of course the Plain of Esdraelon is neither absolutely level nor exactly triangular. At its western end it divides into narrower valleys which connect with the Plain of Acre and the Plain of Sharon. At the east it drops down to the Jordan Valley by several branches. But so sharply does it contrast with the surrounding heights that to the eye it appears to be a great, smooth triangle, whose base from north to south measures fifteen miles, and whose altitude from east to west is about twenty miles. The south-

western side is bounded by the hills of Samaria, which run out into the long, even mass of Mount Carmel. At the north are the highlands of Galilee. The eastern edge is indicated less clearly by a string of separated mountains: Gilboa, Little Hermon and Tabor. The area thus enclosed not only appears perfectly horizontal, but is unbroken by houses or trees or streams. The narrow Kishon, or "Twister," meanders along between high mud banks which prevent it being seen from any distance. So the plain seems like the level surface of a body of water, brown or green according to the season, lying unruffled by the breeze, within the bold headlands which encompass it. Indeed, this was once an arm of the great Jordan Valley lake. Sometime, under proper cultivation, it will be one of the most productive wheat fields in the world; for in the rainy season the old lake bottom is one broad, fertile mud-flat.

Judea is an island of hilltops, separated from the world outside by sudden valleys and barren deserts, and with no important trade routes crossing it. Samaria is more open and accessible, whether for friends or foes; and so Samaria was more affected by corrupt heathen civilizations and fell sooner before invading armies. But the great road *across* Palestine passes through the level plain of Esdraelon. This was the greatest thoroughfare of the ancient world. From Sharon to Jordan, from Phœnicia to Bashan, from Rome to Palmyra, from



The Kishon River and Mount Carmel



Looking across the Plain of Esdraelon to Mount Tabor

THE WAR-PATH OF THE EMPIRES

Gaza to Bagdad, from the Mediterranean to the Sea of Galilee, from Cairo to Babylon, from the Occident to the Orient and back again; the caravans of countless centuries passed and repassed along the "Great Plain."

It is no wonder that this easiest, most-traveled highway of antiquity has been also the war-path of the empires, the scene of more decisive battles than any other place on earth. Again and again, through forty centuries, the fate of continents has hung in the balance while the armies of East and West fought across the smiling wheat fields or floundered in the springtime morasses of the flooded Kishon River.

From the summit of Mount Tabor, Deborah looked down upon the plain where the army of Sisera had been routed by Barak, and sang:

"The kings came and fought;
Then fought the kings of Canaan,
In Taanach by the waters of Megiddo. . . .
The river Kishon swept them away,
That ancient river, the river Kishon.
Oh, my soul, march on with strength."

In the valley north of the hill of Moreh (Little Hermon) Gideon's gallant band of three hundred picked men routed the invading Midianites from beyond Jordan by their sudden night attack. On Mount Gilboa, Saul and Jonathan made their last,

tragic stand against the Philistine army. In the southwestern arm of the plain, King Josiah was defeated and slain by the Egyptian army in the "Valley of Megiddo."

Holofernes set up his camp on the Plain of Esdraelon; so did Pompey and Mark Antony and Titus. Near Mount Tabor, Vespasian in the year 67 A. D. routed the Jewish patriots with great slaughter. The last significant campaign of the Crusades took place when, one after another, the Christian strongholds on the edges of this plain were captured by the Saracen army under Saladin. Six hundred years later, East and West again met on the historic battlefield, when Napoleon Bonaparte was victorious over the Turks, though the victory was won at such great cost that he had to retreat to Acre and give up his ambitious dreams of rivalling Alexander the Great as the conqueror of Asia. It only remains to recall that the plain had so strong a hold upon Hebrew imagination as the greatest of all battlefields that, when the Apocalypse (Rev. 16:16) pictures the final conflict between the forces of good and evil, "the battle of that great day of God Almighty" is fought at Ar-mageddon,* *i.e.*, Megiddo.

* Ar-mageddon is somewhat perplexing, because *ar* (better, *har*) means "mountain," not "plain." Some think that it means Mount Tabor. But there can be little doubt that the reference is to this general locality, as the scene of so many decisive battles.

THE WAR-PATH OF THE EMPIRES

Of course no city could long escape destruction on this war-path of the world; so no place of any importance has ever been built on the plain itself. The strongholds of Esdraelon have always been on spurs of the surrounding mountains. Megiddo, Taanach and Engannim on the southwestern side of the triangle; Harosheth at the western apex; Jezreel, Shunem, Nain and Endor at the eastern base of the central plain: all are a little way up on the slope of the mountains.

As we ride northward toward Galilee, we come first to Jezreel (now *Zer'in*), on a rounded hill three hundred feet in height, which is thrown out into the plain from the last northernmost spur of Mount Gilboa. The situation is so beautiful and commanding that it is no wonder that luxury-loving Ahab and Jezebel chose it for their favorite residence. But the royal city was cursed by idolatry and cruelty, whose classic instance was the murderous plot for acquiring Naboth's vineyard; and the history of Jezreel as a place of any importance ended when Jehu massacred the family and adherents of Ahab and cast the body of proud, wicked Jezebel out of the palace window. To-day the soft pasture-land of the rounded hill is covered with grazing flocks and dotted with black Bedouin tents. Only thirty or forty hovels cluster about the ruin of a large square tower, which rises like a monument at the very summit of the hill.

Seven miles to the north, beyond the head of the

eastern branch of the plain which was presumably the original "Valley of Jezreel," the hill Moreh rises to a height of 1,690 feet, its summit crowned conspicuously by the white-domed tomb of a Moslem saint. The same zeal which localized so many Biblical events within the confines of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre caused the early Christian pilgrims to move Mount Hermon from its somewhat inaccessible northern situation and identify it with this hill on the Plain of Esdraelon. Since the mistake was rectified, the elevation has been commonly known among Europeans as "*Little Hermon.*"

On its western slopes, a little above the plain, are the villages of Shunem, Nain and Endor; all charmingly situated, but all alike, small, crowded, unsanitary collections of mud huts. I have a special interest in Shunem because, unlike Elisha who received such a hospitable welcome there, my friend and I were stoned out of the village. The only other place where I have been stoned is Jenîn; and in both cases it was apparently only the work of a mob of the same kind of young roughs who, in America, would insult a Chinese or a Japanese stranger.

Following the eastern edge of the plain across the mouth of another branch which descends to the Jordan Valley, we reach one of the most beautiful and interesting of mountains, Tabor. It is less than two thousand feet in height, but from a little distance its hemispherical mass seems to start upward right from

the level plain, and its steepness, as well as its isolation, make it an ideal place for a fortress or a watch-tower. Small oak trees still cover a good part of the mountainside, the open spaces provide a fair pasturage, and among the bushes are numerous game-birds and small wild animals, such as foxes and rabbits.

The summit is now divided between two monasteries, belonging respectively to the Latin and Greek Churches. Both are built on the sites of very ancient Christian structures, and both claim that the Transfiguration took place within their precincts. There are two exceptions to the rule that Oriental dogs are starved, spiritless creatures, which lie all day long in the road, only moving a little out of the way when they are kicked, or to avoid being trampled upon by a passing horse. The dogs of the Bedouins and of the monasteries are great, courageous beasts, which resent any intrusion upon the premises they are guarding. One of my friends had to shoot a Bedouin dog before it would loose its grip upon the flank of his galloping horse. But the biggest, fiercest dogs I have ever had to do with personally are those on Mount Tabor. They are usually chained during the daytime; but if they happen to be loose, it would be a very reckless visitor who would attempt to dismount at the monastery gate before the monks appeared.

The artificially leveled summit of Tabor was once entirely occupied by an enormous fortress, whose

outer ramparts enclosed an area several times as large as the entire walled city of Jerusalem. The castle is now a mass of hardly distinguishable ruins, among which can be made out the outlines of several towers and a little church. Among the heaps of fallen stones are a number of dark openings, leading apparently to underground passages which it would be interesting, though perhaps dangerous, to explore.

While some of the lower foundations of this castle go back to Roman times and perhaps earlier, the larger part of the ruins are of Crusading origin. All over Palestine and Syria, from the northern heights of Lebanon down to the Sinaitic Peninsula, at Sidon on the coast, and Baniâs below Mount Hermon, and "Belfort" by the Jordan, and "Belvoir" overlooking the gorge of the Leontes, and on many another strategic situation throughout the length and breadth of the Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem, are the remains of these old Frankish fortresses. Probably nine-tenths of the ancient buildings in Palestine date from the twelfth century. We are filled with wonder and admiration as we contemplate the evidences of the architectural knowledge, administrative ability and splendid daring of those Crusading princes, who, with comparatively small bodies of troops scattered here and there through a strange land, surrounded by a suspicious and unfriendly populace, and always in danger of raids from the Arab world just to the east, yet set up, not a mere

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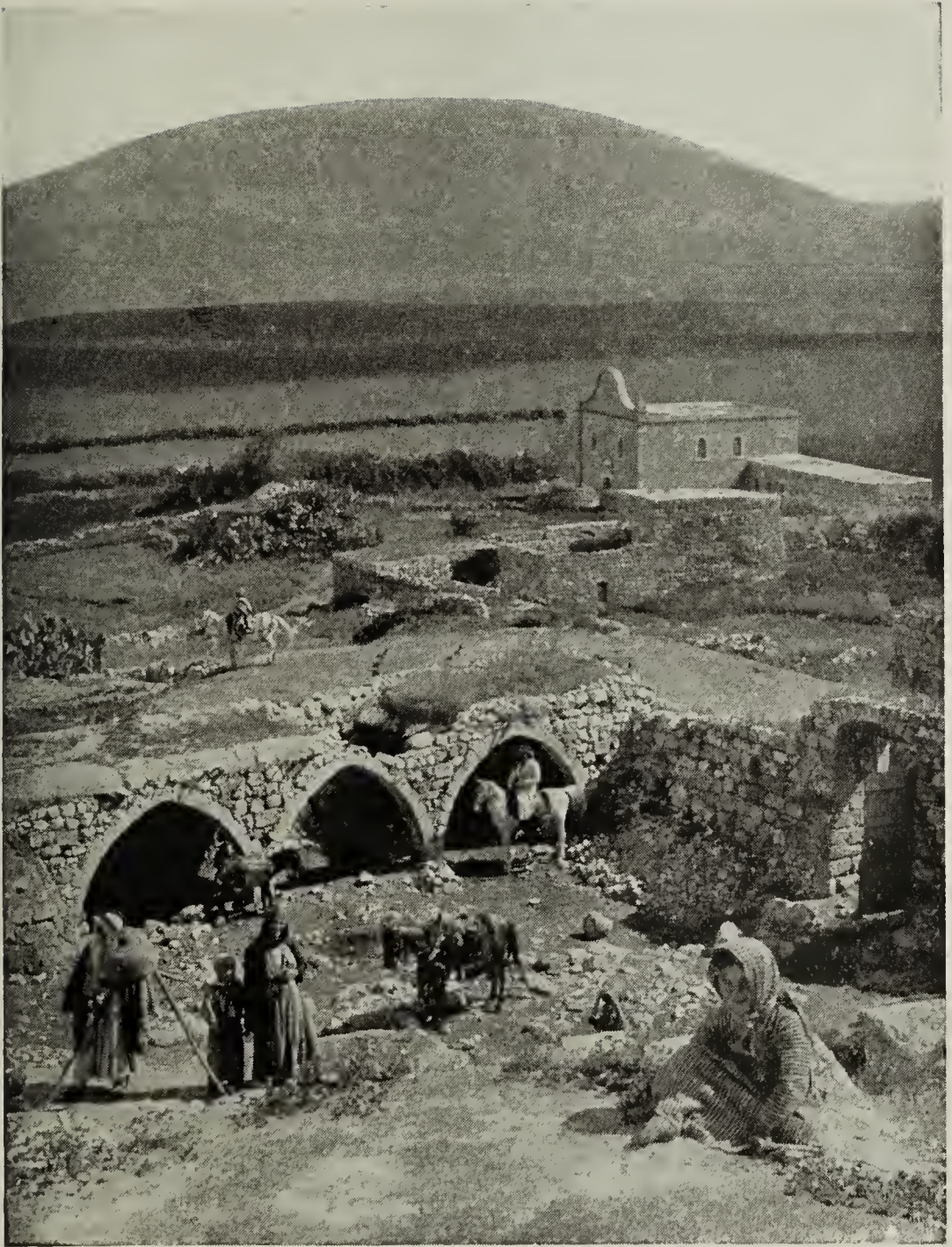
provisional military government, but a completely organized kingdom, with all the ecclesiastical and judicial and political machinery of the Western civilization to which they were accustomed, and built, not temporary shelters and earthen breastworks, but entire new cities and beautiful cathedrals and tremendous fortresses which, even in their ruins, are among the largest and most impressive in the world.

XVI

GREETINGS BY THE WAY

WHEN a certain Oriental charged His disciples to "salute no man on the way," He did not intend to lay down a permanent rule of conduct; for this would have been to strike at one of the strongest social customs of His age and country. The Seventy were sent out upon such an urgent mission that they must disregard even the ordinary amenities until their task was accomplished; but there is no indication that they were lacking in courtesy after this particular journey was ended. The runner who is bearing an important message cannot stop for mere politeness' sake; but we should not be always on the run, and we quite miss the spirit of this injunction of Christ when we apply it to our own everyday lives, and use it as an excuse for a brusqueness that was never taught by the Master or manifested in His own conduct. We shall be nearer the mind of Christ if we remember rather that other time when He taught His followers to greet every person whom they met; for "if ye salute your brethren only, what do ye more than others?"

The modern inhabitants of the Holy Land are seldom discourteous, except where they have come



The village of Nain. In the background, Mount Tabor



Syrian villagers

GREETINGS BY THE WAY

under European or American influence. In the seaport towns, travelers often have to complain of the insolence of the lower classes; but this is because the natives have copied our Western freedom and bluntness of speech, without learning, also, the underlying modesty and honor which we like to believe compensate for our plain-spoken words. The unspoiled Syrian, however, is by nature and training a person of great politeness, and of infinite tact. This is true of poor as well as of rich, and the illiterate Arabs of the desert are famous for their good manners. How different this is from our Occidental civilization, where the very root of "urbanity" and "civility" must be found in the "city" life! The Oriental is also gifted with an ability to read human nature, which seems almost miraculous to our heavier minds. Schoolboys get to know the pet weaknesses of their American teacher long before they learn the English "A B C," and I have heard grimy bootblacks dissect the characters of foreign missionaries and tourists with an acumen that was positively uncanny. When such an insight is coupled with a desire to please, inspired by a highly imaginative mind, and equipped with a language more rich than any other in the world except our own conglomerate English, it is no wonder that social intercourse in Palestine is marked by irresistible refinement and tact—and seems to waste a great deal of time!

As indicated also in the etymology of our English

THE REAL PALESTINE OF TO-DAY

word "salute," the greetings of the East largely have to do with bodily "safety" and peace; yet there is hardly any situation in life that has not its own particular salutation and reply. These are elastic enough, however, to admit of almost infinite variations of wording and warmth.

If you meet a friend on the crowded street of a city, you perhaps will not stop for a conversation; but as you pass by you say, *Naharak sa'id*, "May your day be happy," and he answers, *Sa'id umbarak*, "May your own day be 'happy and blessed.'" These greetings, as well as those which follow, are not so lengthy as the English translation would seem to indicate. In the Arabic there are seldom more than two or three words, which are often rhyming or alliterative. Other passing salutations are, "May your day be white," or, "May God give you prosperity," or, "Good health to you." Up on Lebanon the sturdy mountaineer greets you with "Welcome!" and you reply, "A double welcome!" In certain parts of Judea the farmer says, "May God give you health," to which there is but one proper response, "May He give you health and peace." But if you are a Christian, you must not say to a Moslem, "Peace be unto you," for this greeting is used only between brethren of the same faith.*

* Perhaps the most significant incident of the recent revolution was the jubilant celebration of the new era of fraternity, during which Moslems greeted Christians as "brethren" and wished them "peace."

GREETINGS BY THE WAY

If you have time to stop and talk awhile, which is nearly always the case outside of the larger cities, or better yet, if there is a visitor at your own home, you continue your inquiries as to his health while he sips the cooling sherbet which your servant has brought. "How are you? How is your condition?—health?—well-being? — work? — affairs? — possessions? — manner of living?" Every now and then you will interject, "*Inshallah* (please God) you are well?" and your guest will supplement his affirmative reply with the abbreviated *Hamdillah*, "God be thanked!" At any time that there is a lull in the conversation, the polite inquiries can begin all over again. After an hour's talk with an English-speaking Syrian, I have heard him make a fresh start with, "Good afternoon, sir! How are you?"

When your friend comes from the bath or from being shaved, you would be lacking in civility if you did not gravely say to him, "God prosper you." When he appears in a new suit you greet him with a different blessing. If you wish to be very polite, you say, "May you wear it out with the sweat of health." As a man rises from table you say, "May you have double health," and he turns the wish by adding, "Unto your own heart!" After a person has recovered from an illness, it is natural to greet him with, "Thank God you are well"; but the response must always take the set form, "May God give you also health." At a wedding, after you have exclaimed to

the bridegroom, "O blessed hour!" you turn to the guest near you, and wish that his turn may come next. If he is already married, the expression has to be a little changed: "May it be the turn of your son next." The different holidays and holy days have characteristic salutations, as with us; but it is significant of the lack of security for life and property that the New Year's wish is for "safety," not, as in the West, for a more active happiness.

The salutations just mentioned do not form a tithe of those used in everyday intercourse. There are hundreds of set phrases, with an infinite number of variations to suit every possible contingency. At first the Frank is apt to chafe under the tedium of these multifarious courtesies; but before long he comes to love the beautiful greetings, and misses them when now and then they are lacking. I remember riding one day through a village in northern Lebanon that is famous for the number of its inhabitants who have amassed moderate fortunes in America, and then returned to their own land to end their days in comparative luxury. The first man whom we passed greeted us with: "Hello! You boys talk English?" The second wayfarer shouted: "Hello! I been New York. You fellows Americans, too?" After that we answered passers-by in Italian, until we found a gray-bearded old man who asked twenty-seven Arabic questions about our distinguished healths before he would tell us whether we ought to take the left-hand road or that to the right.

GREETINGS BY THE WAY

Travelers in the Holy Land are apt to condemn the natives because they do not really mean all the kind wishes and protestations of friendship which are expressed in so many different forms. But do we Americans always mean just what we say when we chop off a curt, "G'mornin'," or, "Glad t'meetche"? The people of Palestine are not hoodwinked by the protestations of a false friend any more than we are, and the Arabic salutations are not necessarily less sincere than ours, just because they are more varied and beautiful.

I always feel like a barbarian when I think of my muleteer, Abu Mustapha. He was fat and lazy, he did not know the roads, and he lagged so far behind that we dubbed him *Yawash*, which is Turkish for "Go slow!" On the fourth day of the journey I discharged him with the least possible *bakhsheesh*, and with a blunt American statement as to what I thought of his character. *Yawash*, with a gloomy countenance, went to the stable and harnessed his mules. Then he shuffled shamefacedly into my room and put out his grimy hand, saying quietly, "Farewell, master! Go in peace!" If he cared at all whether I lived or died, it is probable that he would have preferred the latter alternative; but, I repeat, I always feel like a rough-spoken barbarian when I compare myself with fat, lazy old Abu Mustapha.

But it is only when the Arabic salutations fall from the lips of a true friend that you come to appreciate

the beauty of these time-honored compliments. When a kindly host walks with the departing guest, not one mile but twain along the mountain road, and wishes him peace and safety on the dangerous journey; when a gray-bearded sheikh raises his turbaned head to heaven and invokes the manifold blessings of the God of Abraham; when in the 'buses of London or the subway of New York you meet an old friend who drops his newly learned English to greet you in the more rhythmical Arabic of his Eastern home; then the oft-repeated phrases can be filled with a very tender beauty. Foreign residents in Palestine come to use the native salutations even when talking among themselves. At first it is done half in fun; but there is soon felt an increasing desire to intersperse these delicately-turned expressions through the bolder English speech, until at last only the short Saxon "good-by" takes precedence over the gracious Arabic phrases, many of which translate word for word the ancient greetings that must have often come from the lips of Jesus of Nazareth.

XVII

THE RING OF THE GENTILES

GALILEE is different from the rest of Palestine. As you ride across the flat Plain of Esdraelon towards the line of hills which rises abruptly from its northern edge, like a gigantic fortification, you have time to prepare for a scenery and a history very unlike those of the cramped, shut-in mountain country where most of the important events of Hebrew history took place.

The northern district toward which we are riding was no hidden sanctuary for the slow growth of a national spirit and a lofty faith. It was the crossroads of the nations. The Old Testament seldom mentions it except as the scene of fitful forays and frontier skirmishes. In New Testament days it was despised by the conservative southern Jews for its Greco-Roman civilization and was called Galilee (*Galîl* means "Ring" or Province) of the Gentiles. As in the case of French Provence, the name was finally shortened to just Galilee—*the* Province.

This Galilee was famous for the wealth and beauty of its cities, and its European culture. So the exclamation, "Can any good thing come out of Nazareth?"

did not imply that the place was an obscure, secluded, ignorant country village; but rather meant, "Can any good *Jewish* thing come out of this city, which is so near to the great trade routes of the world and so surrounded by the luxurious and corrupting influences of Gentile life that it has become out of sympathy with the ideals of historic Judaism?"

Geologically this northern district is connected with Syria rather than Palestine; for the heights of Galilee are long, root-like spurs thrown southward from the mountains of Lebanon. Politically, it is to-day included in the *vilâyet* of Beirût.

Rising at the south from about the level of the Samaritan hills beyond the Plain of Esdraelon, the northern half of Galilee has the highest average elevation of any part of Palestine. The entire district seems much more fertile than any we have yet visited. The scenery is more like that at home. Numerous unfailing brooks are fed by the springs in the northern mountains. The out-croppings of bare gray rock are fewer than even in Samaria. Among the scattered forest trees of the hilltops is a close growth of underbrush; in the valleys are rich wheat fields and olive orchards; and on the middle slopes are broad, swelling, grassy pasture lands like those of Scotland.

Indeed, when comparing Galilee with the rest of Palestine, you are often reminded of Scotland. The air is fresher and more moist than in the south. The



Nazareth from the northeast.

Just behind the hills in the background lies the Plain of Esdraelon



The Spring of the Lady Mary

THE RING OF THE GENTILES

climate is cooler. The outlook is freer. The mountains are higher. The inhabitants seem more independent—and sometimes more churlish. Like Scotland, Galilee has long been noted for its turbulence and its impatience of southern rule. The Galileans were always rebels at heart. One thinks also of how Scotland was for centuries in heartier sympathy with France than with England, just as Galilee was in such close touch with Gentile civilization. To complete the comparison, from both of these virile, independent northern peoples have come intellectual and religious leaders of world-wide influence.

The chief town of modern Galilee is Nazareth, which has given its name to all Oriental Christians, who are now called in Arabic *Nasâra* (singular *Nusrâni*) or “Nazareth-people.” The town lies in a shallow basin among the hills at the extreme southern edge of Galilee, a thousand feet above the Plain of Esdraelon. From a distance, the cluster of houses, like all Syrian towns, is dazzling white; seen from nearby, the circle of green orchards and cactus hedges (introduced into Palestine from America!) is a notable and pleasing feature of the landscape. The inhabitants number about 10,000, of whom a third are Moslems. The people of Nazareth have the reputation of being rude and inhospitable. I found them, however, very polite and obliging.

On account of its fine location and sacred associations, there is a larger foreign element in Nazareth

than in any other city of Palestine except Jerusalem. The Russians have here schools for boys and girls, a pilgrim's hospice and a normal college; the Germans have a hotel and a mill; the Scotch have a medical mission; the English have an orphanage and a church (with a Syrian rector). There are religious houses of various Latin orders, such as the Franciscans, the Clarisses, the Sisters of St. Joseph, and the Ladies of Nazareth. The Greek Orthodox, Greek Catholic, and Maronite Churches also have important establishments here. Perhaps it is largely due to the example of foreigners that the homes of the natives are many of them well-built and clean; so that, on the whole, Nazareth appears to be the most solidly constructed and prosperous city in the country.

Of course, all sorts of events in the life of the Holy Family have been exactly localized, and commemorated by sacred buildings. In some cases the opposing sects each have their own rival sites. Thus, the Greek and Latin Churches of the Annunciation are at exactly opposite ends of the town; as far apart as the two communions are in mutual appreciation and sympathy. The "Workshop of Joseph" is within the Franciscan Monastery. The synagogue in which Christ is said to have taught is now made over into a Greek Catholic Church. The "Table of Christ," on which He and His disciples dined, is a block of stone twelve feet long, which is treasured by the Latins.

THE RING OF THE GENTILES

The most venerable and respectable traditions of Nazareth cluster around the Latin Church of the Annunciation. Under the center of the high altar a flight of marble steps descends to a series of caves like those in Bethlehem, only rather smaller. The first of these is the Angel's Chapel, with an altar to Gabriel. Directly back of this is the Chapel of the Annunciation, with the inscription in Latin, "Here the Word was made flesh." A column marks the place where Gabriel addressed Mary, and another column, which is broken off at the base and held only by the joint at the ceiling, is "miraculously" supported over the spot where the Virgin stood. The third cave, originally part of the second, from which it is separated now by an artificial wall, is dedicated to Joseph. From this, a narrow, curving flight of steps leads to a cistern called the "Kitchen of the Virgin." The mouth of the cistern is pointed out as the chimney of the kitchen. After you have wandered about through ecclesiastical Palestine for a while, you wonder whether the ancient Hebrew inhabitants spent all their time underground.

Over these caves stood the house of the Virgin; but on May 10, 1291, it was in such danger of desecration by the approaching Moslem army that angels lifted it bodily and carried it over the sea to Tersatto, on the heights above Fiume. Three years later it was again miraculously lifted up, transported across the Adriatic, and set down in a laurel grove on the Italian

coast. There, in the famous pilgrimage town of Loreta, beneath the dome of the Church of the Holy House, can be seen to this day the *Casa Santa*, a small, one-story stone structure, which is surely the most traveled building in the world. The truth of the story of its wonderful journeyings was officially confirmed by the Roman Catholic Church, during the pontificate of Pope Paul II.

Nazareth has only one source of water supply, outside of the cisterns which store the winter rains. In the northern edge of the hollow in which the city lies, is a small spring, the water of which is piped a few hundred feet to a public fountain. This is now known as '*Ain Sitti Miryam* or "the Spring of the Lady Mary"; and indeed it is practically certain that the mother of Jesus must have come often to this one fountain which her native town possessed, and carried home the water for household purposes in a great earthen jar balanced on her head, just as we see the young women of Nazareth doing to-day.

It is about four hours steady riding from Nazareth to the Sea of Galilee. One route takes you over the hill back of the town, to the little village of Cana, only thirty or forty minutes' walk for Jesus and His mother when they went thither for the wedding feast.

From Cana on, there is little of special interest until we come out on the edge of the broad, billowy,



A street in Cana



The Horns of Hattin

THE RING OF THE GENTILES

treeless moor which drops eastward in long, soft curves toward the basin of the Sea of Galilee. Some wheat fields are here; but a large part of the tableland is rich grazing ground. Flowers are abundant, of course. So is animal life. Birds fly overhead or twitter in the long grass. Camels are feeding by the hundred, just as cattle do on the plains at home. Small wild animals scurry away when they hear our horses coming. A graceful little gazelle gives us one frightened glance, and then streaks across the moor like a flash of animated lightning. But a brown fox strolls up casually to within fifty yards of us, and then calmly sits down to inspect the strangers, just as though some one had told him that we had no guns.

Above the rolling tableland rises a saddle-shaped hill, whose two curious humps are known as the "Horns of Hattîn." The high, grassy hollow between them has long been considered the place where the multitudes sat while Christ preached the Sermon on the Mount.

"A city set on a hill cannot be hid." There it is! The Master must have pointed toward it as He spoke the words; for lofty Safed, twelve miles to the north of Hattîn, is the highest town in Galilee, and it glistens in the sunlight like a piece of white marble lying upon the brown mountainside.

Safed is now considered by the Jews to be one of the four sacred cities of the world (see page 52);

and it is believed that this is to be the birthplace of the Messiah. It contains more Jews than any other place in Palestine except Jerusalem. They make up more than half of its population of 25,000, and are noted for their orthodoxy, conceit and shiftlessness. They conform to all the demands of the Law, Mosaic and post-Mosaic. They will not even wind their watches on the Sabbath or write a letter of the alphabet, and they spend much of their time in furious and fanatical discussions over trifling details of form and practice, as did the Pharisees of old. There is no wall around Safed; so in order to put into force the Hebrew laws concerning walled towns, these zealous legalists once erected poles at the ends of all the streets and strung wires between them, to serve as a substitute for a wall.

These Jews of Safed are, like all others in Palestine, European Jews. They are largely supported by their co-religionists in the West, and in return perform the rites of the faith as vicarious substitutes for rich Jews in the great capitals, who are too busy to attend personally to the rigid requirements of the Talmudic laws. One young Safed Jew paid his way through college by serving as a scapegoat for a number of his friends who wanted to be clear of guilt for the Day of Atonement, and who therefore cast all their sins upon him, at a *medjedie* (dollar) a head. After a somewhat intimate acquaintance with the young man, I should say that he really

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did possess the iniquity of at least fifty ordinary sinners.

On the high, rolling plain to the east and south of Hattîn there took place, on July 5, 1187, one of the decisive battles of the world, which practically settled the outcome of the Crusades and determined whether Christians or Moslems should rule the Holy Land.

On one side was the flower of European chivalry, who bore among them as a talisman a fragment of the True Cross. But the flower was faded, and the Cross dishonored by cruelty and treachery and lust. The nominal ruler of the Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem, Guy of Lusignan, was a weak, vacillating puppet, who was always ready to follow the counsel of his latest adviser. The noble vows of the Knights of the Hospital and the Temple had long since been trampled in the dust of their selfish ambition. The Crusading princes were enervated by the climate, envious and suspicious of one another, and smitten by the guilty knowledge that they had wantonly broken truce with the foe now marching upon them. The men-at-arms were dizzy with the summer heat, parched with thirst, itching and burning from the smoke of the smudge fires which the enemy had kindled around them.

Against these weakened, disheartened, disunited and unfaithful soldiers of the Cross came the myriads

of lean, sunburned Saracens, hardened to the climate, familiar with the country, centuries in advance of Europe in their knowledge of the importance of advancing to battle in open order, on fire with the zeal of a Holy War against the "Infidel" invaders, smarting with anger at the Christians' impudent disregard of treaty promises, and led by one of the greatest generals of all time, the gallant Kurd, Saladin.

Foolish, wearying rushes when the Crusaders should have stood on the defensive—panic-stricken inactivity when there should have been a bold attack—fickle changes from one half-tried stratagem to another—shameful cries of "*sauve qui peut*," as princes boldest at the council table fled first from the Saracen attack—magnificent, useless courage of many a true knight who fell facing the enemy with the corpses of his men-at-arms piled high around him—brave, stubborn struggles by regiments of exhausted foot-soldiers who were dying of thirst and heat before ever the enemy's arrows pierced their panting bosoms—and then, on the upper slopes of the very Mount where He whose name they bore said "Love your enemies," the last battle-standard of the Crusaders was dragged down; the last little company of Christian knights driven over the precipice, or spared for future massacre or Saracen slavery.

Saladin was now practically master of all Palestine. Jerusalem itself fell three months afterwards.

THE RING OF THE GENTILES

Later Crusades, which started from Europe with impressive pomp and high hopes, never seriously threatened the Moslem rule over the Holy Land. The fate of Palestine for all the succeeding centuries was settled on that burning July day when the Crusading armies were swept down to tragic, shameful defeat on the plains of Hattîn.

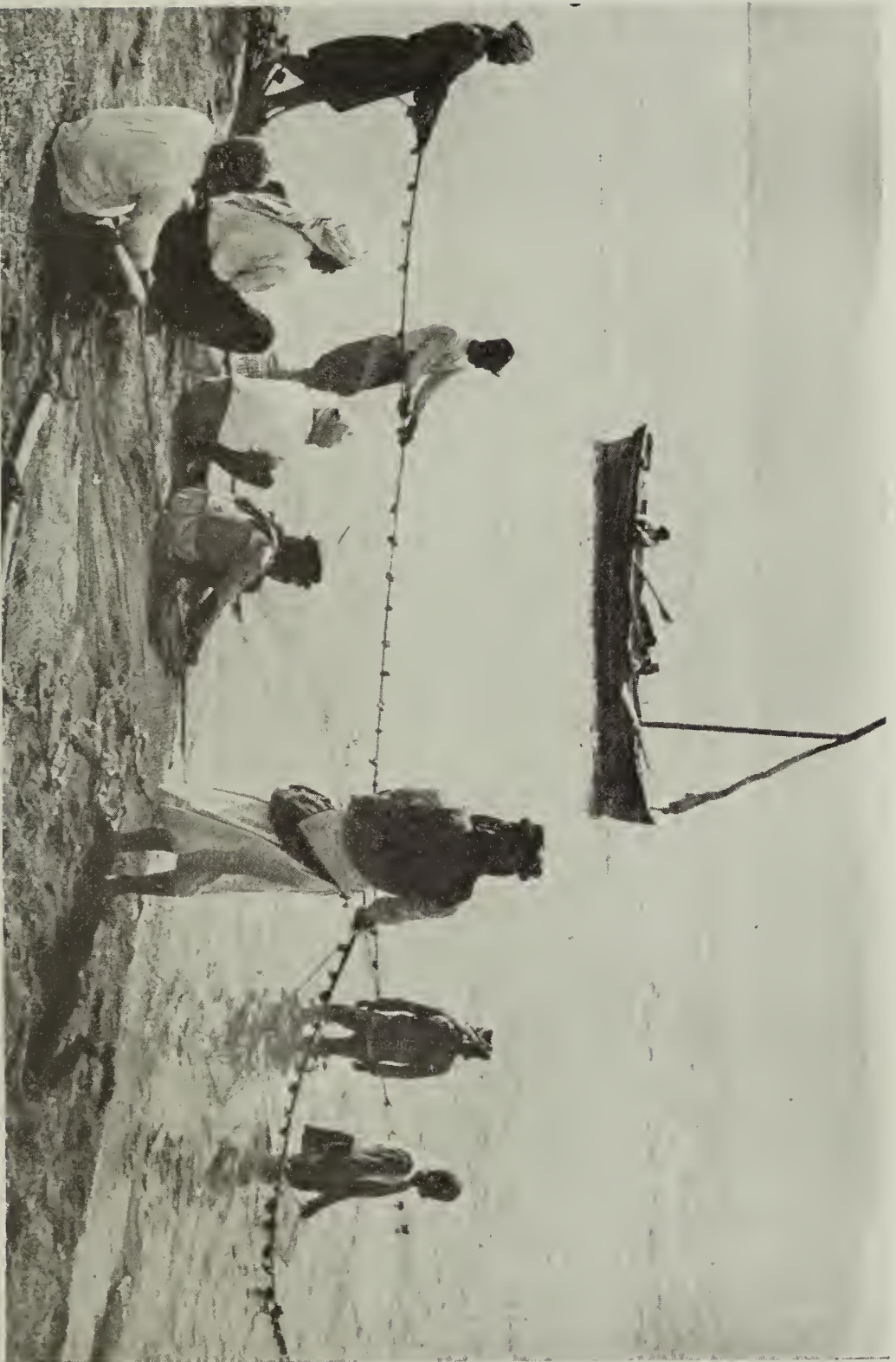
XVIII

THE LAKE OF GOD'S DELIGHT

TWICE I have approached the Sea of Galilee just at sunset. In front of us the green fields sloped down to the blue lake. The cliffs on the other side, though eight miles away, were distinctly mirrored on the calm surface of the water. Tiberias on the shore below us and Safed on the mountain far above were all a glittering white, but less white than great Hermon, whose snow-clad summit rose, unchallenged in its grandeur, high above the red clouds that floated over the marshes of Merom.

I think that the old rabbis must have had in mind some such view as that when they taught that, of all the seas which God has created, this one is His special delight.

But the only beauty of the Sea of Galilee which remains is that of the water and sky and mountains. The glory of the rich and splendid Greco-Roman cities, which in the time of Christ stretched in a dazzling circle around the shores of the sea, has gone forever. The very location of proud Capernaum is a subject of scholarly disputation. Save for a few tiny, poverty-stricken hamlets here and there, the



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Fishermen by the Sea of Galilee



The City of Tiberias

THE LAKE OF GOD'S DELIGHT

only inhabited place is the city of Tiberias, built long ago by a cruel tyrant on an accursed spot above an ancient graveyard, and so shunned by pious Hebrews and, for all its importance, never once mentioned in the New Testament. Yet to-day—such is the irony of history—this is counted one of the four sacred Hebrew cities, and is inhabited almost entirely by Jewish immigrants from Europe, who drag out a miserable existence by the aid of the alms sent by their co-religionists abroad, and study the Talmud diligently and, like the Jews of Safed, are very punctilious about observing all the requirements of the Law, and every autumn shake with chills and fever, and die like rats when the pest comes. I had hardly left Tiberias when, in this town of barely 5,000 people, the death rate from Asiatic cholera rose to a hundred a day.

But as soon as you get out of sight of Tiberias, the beauty of the deep blue water and pebbly shores and soft, distant mountains and the strong, comforting vision of majestic Hermon again grip your soul. You can readily imagine that not mere glistening stones and sand but marble palaces shine yonder across the lake; and in some quiet, grassy cove beside the gently lapping wavelets you can picture the multitudes sitting while they listen to the simple, wondrous words of Him who told them stories of their everyday fishing or farming life—stories with a meaning as deep as the waters of Galilee, as fresh as

the mountain breezes and as instinct with lofty hopefulness as yonder cone of Hermon rising upward to the clouds of heaven.

The Sea of Galilee, however, is not always calm. The mountains immediately adjoining it are 2,000 feet high, and through their deep gorges the storm winds are sucked into the hollow of the lake, so that sudden squalls come literally out of a blue sky. One charming spring morning we started out to sail from Tiberias to the traditional site of Capernaum. There was not a ripple on the water or a cloud in the heavens. But when we were a quarter of a mile from shore, our boatmen noticed a band of rough water rushing toward us from the other side of the lake. In spite of our remonstrances, they immediately gave up the plan for making Capernaum, took down the sail with such frantic haste that they nearly upset the boat, and then rowed for the land with all their might and with excited urgings to one another. We thought them a very cowardly crew. But hardly had the boat been beached in a sheltered cove, when the wind was howling down on us from the mountains, and the heavy breakers were foaming along the shore and as far out into the lake as we could see.

A quarter of an hour later, the Sea of Galilee was again as level as a mirror, and only a soft, warm breeze was blowing over the smiling waters.

Like all mountain lakes, this one is very deep. Reported soundings go all the way from two hundred

THE LAKE OF GOD'S DELIGHT

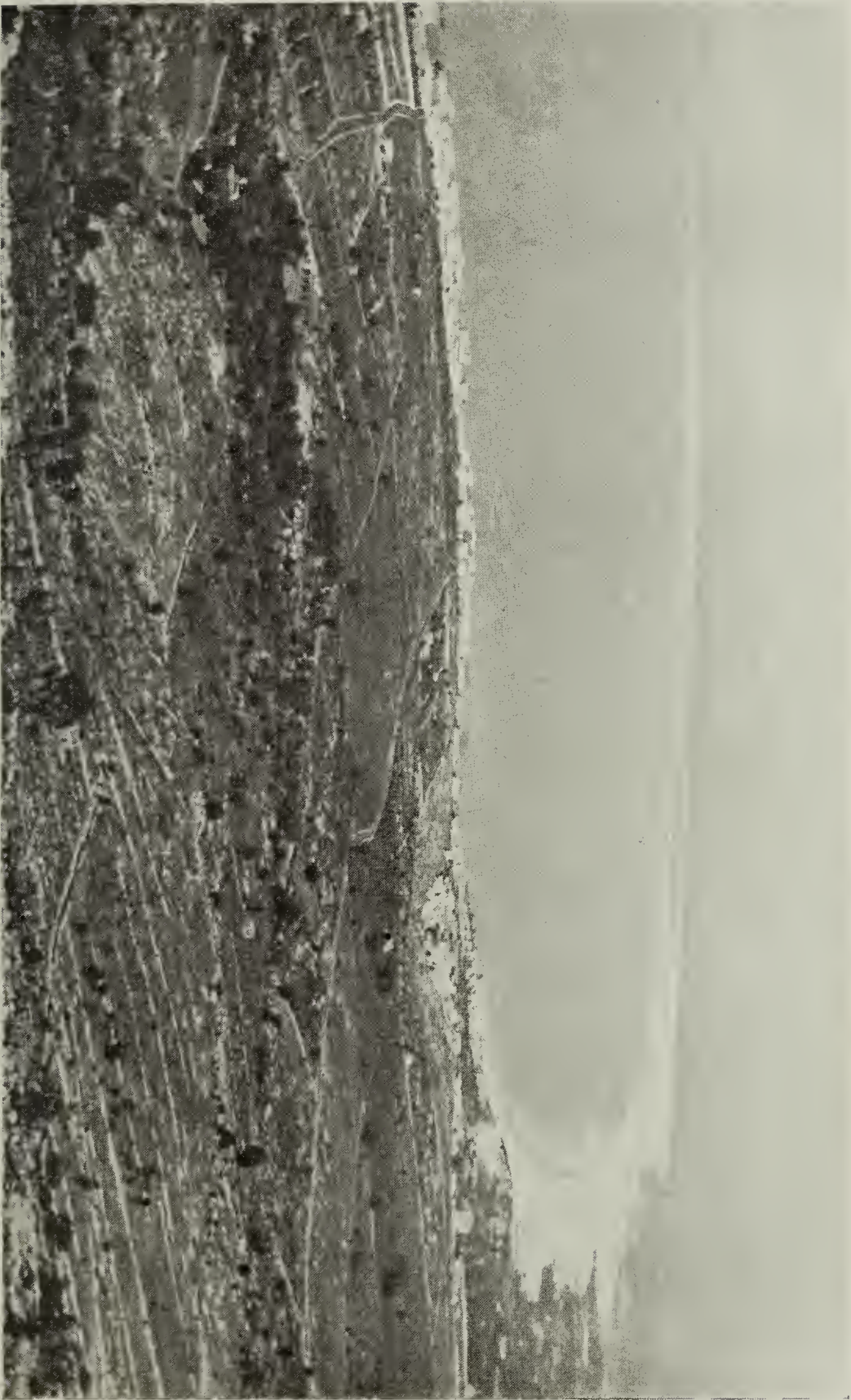
feet to a very suspicious seven hundred feet. Its water is clear and fresh, and abounds in fish, some varieties of which are found nowhere else outside of the tropics. The rabbis believed that the local fishing regulations went back to the days of Joshua. In Roman days the pickled fish of Galilee were sold all over the Empire, and were highly esteemed for their delicious flavor. There are now few craft on the lake, perhaps a dozen in all; but still at eventide you can see the fishermen coming home with their boats loaded almost to the gunwales, and still the sons of Zebedee mend their great nets which are spread out to dry on the pebbly beach.

XIX

THE GLORY OF ALL LANDS

WE have lost the steamer by a few short hours; but *ma besail*, "never mind!" We have both missed important engagements; but *ma besail!* My traveling companion is lying helpless at the inn, with a cold compress on his throbbing forehead; but *ma besail!* Who cares? Not he; for every few minutes a pretty little waitress tiptoes into the darkened room with something more cooling than the last: not I; for after the long ride, with poor food, poor beds and poor mounts, it is the acme of delight to lie at full length on the warm slope of Carmel and brood idly over the long sweep of the Bay of Acre. It is very warm and very still up here on the brow of the mountain. On the whole vault of the glaring sky there is not a cloud the size of a man's hand, and the blazing sun beats down upon my pith helmet with an enervating heat that leads to drowsy day-dreams and lazy content.

The landscape is wrapped in a decorous calm, like that of a Sabbath afternoon. The souging of the sea breeze rises and falls with a soothing melody, into which the twittering of the sparrows breaks with



Haifa and the Bay of Acre, from Mount Carmel



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View from the Horns of Hattin

THE GLORY OF ALL LANDS

irreverent distinctness. From far below there comes the sound of the muffled lapping of the waves, and now and then the faint crowing of a distant cock. A few tiny sailing vessels rock slowly to and fro in the little harbor of Haifa; and then the sand sweeps around in a dazzling arc, past the ruined walls of Acre to the steep headland of the "Ladder of Tyre." Back of the beach, the blue Kishon winds lazily through the green orchards and wheat fields. Farther inland, on the other side of the Plain of Esdraelon, are the rounded summits of Gilboa and Little Hermon; and through the haze are dimly seen the mysterious mountains beyond the Jordan. I cannot make out Mount Tabor to-day, and Nazareth lies hidden in a little hollow; but the summit of the hill just back of the city is in clear view, and beyond it the heights of Galilee lead up to the mountain peaks of Lebanon.

This is indeed a goodly land, even when viewed apart from its historic and religious associations. To the ancient prophets it may well have seemed the land "which is the glory of all lands." I did not think so at first: many foreigners never think so at all. The short, hurried trip of the spring tourist, full of excitement and fatigue, as well as unpleasant experiences with dirt and dragomans, heat and hotels, leaves little time or inclination to dwell upon the beauties of nature. Few travelers penetrate into the mountain regions of northern Lebanon, and those who visit Judea and Galilee do not come with the same

THE REAL PALESTINE OF TO-DAY

purpose that prompts a sojourn in Switzerland or the Engadine; for it is the memory of the great men who have lived here and the Master who died here that gives to the country a solemn beauty which is richer than that of mountain or river or forest.

Then it is true that Palestine is very different from America, especially from the northern and eastern parts of America; and it is this strangeness which most impresses one at the beginning of a residence here. There are very few brooks. As has been said, most of the streams are mere *wâdis* which flow only during the rainy season. The largest rivers are the Leontes and Jordan; and neither of these is navigable, even for small fishing-smacks. There is no turf in Palestine, and no lawns, and the American traveler misses the forests and orchards and shade-trees of his own land. What few trees there are seem stunted and faded, and the mountains look very bare to one who has just come from a land of rolling pastures and wooded hillsides. When I used to get so homesick during those first months in Syria, it was always for some particular sheet of water or patch of green; the little mill-pond near my home, or the woods out at the farm, or a shady piece along the country road.

After the first year, however, the strangeness began to wear off, and I became reconciled to the fact that this land is not at all like America, and was never intended to be. Then I began to love the new home for its own sake. When I came here, I thought that

THE GLORY OF ALL LANDS

this was the most desolate country I had ever seen; now it seems full of fertility. Where the great mountainsides looked bare and white and glaring, there are now marvelous depths of color; while the once dull, dry, dusty fields are all bespangled with gorgeous flowers. It is not the landscape that has changed, but myself. When I came here, I looked everywhere for things American, and was disappointed because I did not find them; now I look for things Syrian, and new beauties reveal themselves every hour.

From beginning to end it is a land of contradictions; bare and brilliant, arid and fertile; with a burning sun which beats upon cool, comfortable houses; with impudent children who reverence gray hairs; with bloodthirsty bandits who would die in defense of an unknown guest; with unscrupulous sharpers and unselfish hospitality; with a glib, formal politeness which often covers a warm heart; where the women wear trousers and the men wear skirts; where the epidemics of cholera and plague cannot permanently destroy the healthfulness of the mountain breezes; where there is never a grass plot, though the fields and hillsides are covered with bright blossoms.

Even under present conditions, the soil is fertile; and it could be made to bear still more generous harvests under a government which would insure the tranquillity and justice which are necessary before foreign capital will be invested in schemes for irrigation, improvement of roads and the introduction

of modern agricultural machinery. The exports are now practically all products of the soil. Beirût ships about two million pounds of tobacco every year. The mulberry tree flourishes, and six hundred thousand pounds of raw silk are annually exported to Marseilles. There are large wheat fields on the plains of Esdraelon, Coele-Syria and Hamath. The Plain of Sharon, besides being still celebrated for its flowers and fruits, yields a splendid return of wheat and barley; and east of the Sea of Galilee the plain of the Haurân, which is the great natural granary of western Asia, gives even a larger harvest, although the farming is of the most primitive character. The oranges of Jaffa, Sidon and Tripoli are famous throughout Europe. The olive forest of Beirût is said to be the second largest in the world. Shechem has no fewer than twenty-two perennial springs. The road to Damascus winds through mile after mile of luxuriant orchards and vineyards, which are fed by the rushing waters of Abana and Pharpar. Even the "desert" affords a fair pasturage after the early rains. And hidden up in the mountain regions is many a valley like a fairy garden, with countless waterfalls ringing into the little brook beneath, and the terraces of the steep hillsides all crowded with vineyards and orchards of olive, fig and mulberry. If we include Hermon and Lebanon, there is no other district of like size in the world which produces such a variety of food products as does the Holy Land.

THE GLORY OF ALL LANDS

There may be no turf, but there is an amazing wealth of flowers. Last week, as we rode between the fields of wheat, already higher than our stirrups, the broad caravan trail was almost hidden under a carpet of bloom. Several times between Mount Tabor and the Sea of Galilee we actually wandered off from the road, because the grain and flowers had spread quite across it from field to field. Probably the Palestinian farmer calls these flowers "weeds"; but some of them were such weeds as would be welcomed into any American conservatory. The most striking were the garish scarlet poppies, whose blossoms were full four inches in diameter; but the red and white anemones were almost as large and showy. Then there were orchids of every conceivable shape and size and color, besides the high hollyhock, the delicate cyclamen, the stalwart thistle just bursting into bloom, the more modest daisy and buttercup and dandelion, and a little blue flower enough like the forget-me-not to bring up memories of home. There was many a square yard within which we could have counted a score of colors, and twice as many varieties of wild flowers. One does not need to be an artist or a botanist to appreciate the splendor of such an array: red, pink, yellow, blue, white, purple, scarlet, green, lavender—all the hues of the rainbow crowded together with the supreme disregard of color-harmony which is successful only in Nature's studio.

And the flowers are not confined to the fertile low-

lands. I have ridden down many a valley of Lebanon whose terraced sides seemed like the tables of a hot-house, which raised their delicate blossoms just high enough so that now and then we could lean from the saddle and pluck the cluster which most struck our fancy. The campus of the American College at Beirût is laid out upon a rocky bluff near the head of the cape, where the soil does not appear to be especially productive; yet there are over two hundred varieties of wild flowers growing within the college enclosure. Even on the summit of Mount Hermon, among the snow which lasts well into the summer, many a warm slope is covered with flowers so large and showy that it is hard to realize that no florist has tended them except the Syrian sun.

Then the gardens are almost as beautiful as the fields of wild flowers. These gardens are always hidden from public view; for the Oriental does not like to take his pleasures where all the world can watch him. Along the dusty roads there front only high walls, with broken bottles spread inhospitably along the top, where a myriad lizards lazily sun themselves, or scurry away into their crevices at the sight of the weary traveler. But behind these same walls there are fragrant blossoms and spreading trees, with clean pebble walks and comfortable benches, where one can spend the heat of the day under the cool of green bowers beside the central fountain, sleeping or reading or listening to the *bulbul* singing in the branches



The ground between the olive trees is often sown with wheat



The ground beneath the olive trees is usually covered with a gay carpet of flowers

THE GLORY OF ALL LANDS

of the sycamore. Once or twice I have even seen a little piece of English lawn. Last winter a friend of mine gave away fifteen bushels of chrysanthemums, in order to clear out the tangle in her garden. Roses can be made to bloom twelve months in the year. I know of a garden—a very small one—where there are seventeen varieties of roses, and another where there are twenty-five. All of them are now in blossom, in April, and the largest bush has climbed twenty feet up a neighboring cypress tree, from which its thousands of flowers hang over the garden path in long, graceful festoons of pink.

The trees are usually smaller than those of America, but they are not without a beauty of their own. As you ride down from the neighboring hills, the olive orchards of Sidon can be seen long before the city is reached; and few occupations are quite so satisfactory as lying in one of these same orchards and eating the golden fruit plucked from the low-lying branches. Near the *Tell el-Kassîs*, where Elijah is said to have slain the prophets of Baal, we passed a small oak forest whose glades were as spruce and clean as a carefully tended city park at home. Pine trees are often found on the hillsides; and up on highest Lebanon are still preserved a few groves of cedars; great hoary giants, hundreds of years old, beautiful both in themselves and for the memories which they suggest.

This is the native land of the olive, and the olive

tree has always been a symbol of fertility and prosperity. At first I did not like these trees. They seemed small and pale; but chiefly I criticised them because they were not apple trees, which was illogical and unjust. Once granted that an olive can never be an apple, even an American comes to waver in his allegiance to the orchards at home. The Syrian tree has a singular fascination. There may be young olive trees, but they never *look* young. The trunks are always knotted and gnarled, or twisted into fantastic shapes like the forms of writhing imprisoned goblins. Often there is a great hollow in the center of the trunk, which is filled with stones to give the necessary stability. These twisted, weather-beaten trees, leaning on their stone supports, are strangely redolent of age and dignity, of grandfathers and ruined grandeur. Yet the ground beneath is usually covered with a gay carpet of flowers. Near the city of Samaria we passed an orchard whose scarred old trunks bore up their delicate foliage over a velvety field of wheat. The contrast of the greens of the grain and trunks and leaves was very beautiful; so was the contrast between age and newness. It was all clean and prosperous, yet sedate and dignified, like the ruined towers which rise above the neat lawns of Kenilworth.

The olive color seen in masses has a strangely weird quality. It always reminds me of the moonlight; and an olive orchard really seen in the moonlight is

THE GLORY OF ALL LANDS

uncanny. You look down the long, even glades between the rows of trees, and fantastic sprites are formed from the distant trunks. The tiny leaves are lost in the great feathery mass above; the brilliant light throws moving shadows on the grass beneath; and over it all is that most delicate, most fascinating of colors, the olive green—suggestive of mystery and witchery and powers hidden from our coarser natures.

We have already stood on many a mountain-top and drunk in the mountain air and the mountain view. Crowning all the rest is "the glory of Lebanon," sung by the Psalmist and dreamed of by the prophets as the great, peerless type of fertility and virility and manly beauty. The Syrians say that Lebanon bears winter on its head, spring on its shoulders, summer on its bosom, while autumn lies slumbering at its feet. This is not the place to tell of the wonders of the northern mountain range: like the poet-preachers of Israel, we can only think of it as something far-off and ideal in its inimitable splendor. But if I had the time, I should like to sing of the mountains I know and love so well. I should tell of their deep, rocky gorges and warm, green valleys, the sheep and goats upon their sheltered alpine pastures, their sturdy inhabitants, their thousands of cold, pure springs, their musical waterfalls and natural bridges and unexplored caverns, their great Crusading castles and massive ruined temples, their delicious fruits, the cool pine groves found here and there on their

upper slopes, the snow banks that never melt during the hottest summers, and the noble prospects from the highest summits.

Th crowning glory of a Palestinian landscape, however, is just its brilliant coloring. Before I left America, it seemed to me that the vivid tints of Tissot's paintings must surely be exaggerated; but they fall short of the reality. Of course no artist could hope to reproduce the marvelous warmth and depth of the landscape, or to imitate the vague, soft hues which are so characteristic of the Palestinian atmosphere; but it would be almost as impossible to find tints that were over-bright, or to arrange them in a color scheme too daring to be matched by the Syrian sun. Unfortunately the tourist season, from February to April, is at a time of year when there are very apt to be clouds and mists, and even occasional showers. The most beautiful hues are seen only when the sky has cleared for the dry season. Then the long, clear, though not cloudless summers give to the atmosphere an Italian transparency, and the morning and evening skies surpass any that I have ever seen in Italy.

The very nights are full of color. The moonlight is so brilliant that it is easy to read a guide-book; and even on a moonless night and in the wilderness, far from any city's glare, the starlight has been so bright that I could see the second-hand of my watch, and could find quite a distinct shadow cast by



The gardens are almost as beautiful as the fields of wild flowers



A cedar of Lebanon

THE GLORY OF ALL LANDS

Jupiter. A moonlit scene at home gives only the impression of light spots and dark spots: everything is black or white or gray. But here the moonlight shows all the colors of the rainbow. The green of the trees and grain, the red of the tile roofs, the blue of sea and sky, and the gray of the distant mountains are softer and more delicate, but hardly less distinct one from the other than in the sunlight.

But the sunset colors are the best of all, especially where the mountains come close to the sea. After the day's work is done, we like to sit on the rocks at the point of the cape and wait for the sunset. It is never twice the same. Sometimes there is not a cloud to be seen, and the waters meet the firmament in one vast sheet of dazzling bronze. Usually there are great cumulous banks near the horizon; but with no mists to dull the outlines, so that the edges of the clouds are as clear-cut as the canvas scenery of a stage. Often the mirage makes kaleidoscopic changes in sea and cloud and sun. Now the yellow disk is flattened like a drop of molten metal. The next moment it is a regular hexagon, which splits into two suns, one in the sea and one in the sky; or it rounds into two hemispheres, which turn away from each other, like the halves of a squat hour-glass of gold. As the sun sinks down between the sea and sky, there is no blurring or indistinctness. The last star-like gleam hovers for an instant upon the face of the waters. Then suddenly it is evening, and it is cool

down by the shore. But out from under the western horizon, the dead sun sends up a blare of fire which sets the heavens ablaze with splendor.

As we turn homeward from the rocky point, we see the final sunset glory, not in the west but in the east. Straight in front of us the mountains are bathed in the evening light. The reddish tint on the rocky slopes deepens into a richer alpenglow as it lingers for a moment on the snow-capped summit, so that the green of the orchards and vineyards below is quite lost in the warmer hue of the mountainside. When the rose color has risen off the highest peaks, it is followed up by a veil of pink, and that in turn by a Tyrian purple which clothes every jagged summit and rounded slope with a distanceless, heightless majesty, and fills the depths of the rocky *wâdis* with a fathomless mystery.

We pause for a moment by the little roadside mosque to hear the *muezzin* sing the call to prayer; and as the long-drawn notes vibrate sweetly into rest, it seems as if they too were but a part of the rich color-harmony of the Eastern evening.

Where I am writing these last lines, the Sabbath quiet of Mount Carmel has given place to the nervous clamor of a Western metropolis. The whole city is blatant of surplus energy and reeking with new-found wealth. Five lines of electric cars are clanging past the corner below. The sky is overcast with factory

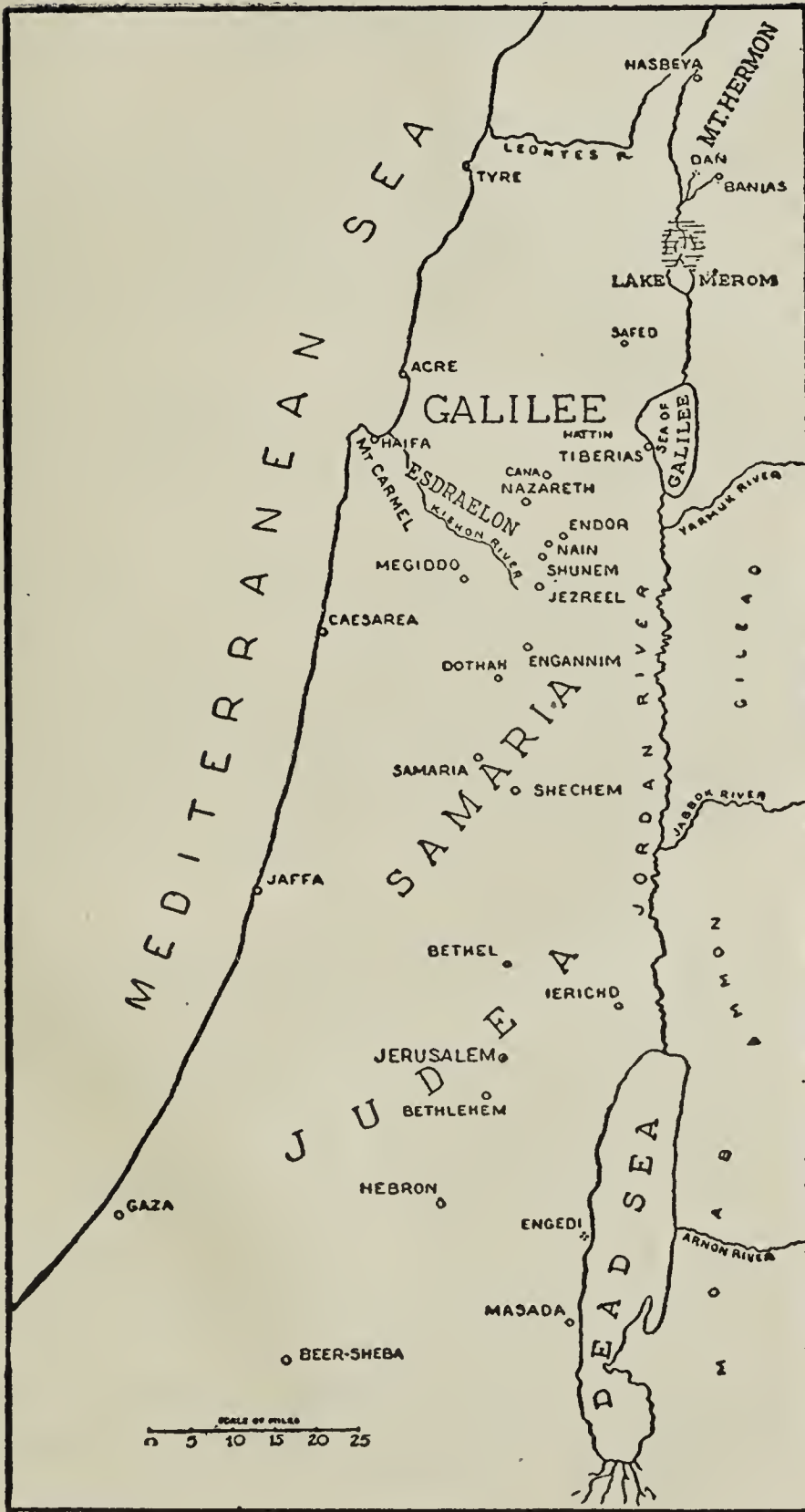
THE GLORY OF ALL LANDS

smoke. Newsboys are hawking the latest "extra," still damp from the press. This is life indeed; earnest, virile, successful life! It is ambition! It is opportunity! It is progress!

But a warm land breeze which comes in through the open window puffs it all away; and I feel the desert sirocco blowing hot under my battered old pith helmet, as I jog along the rocky paths of Palestine, or rest lazily under some gnarled olive tree, whose low-spread branches frame a picture of sunset seas and purpling mountain peaks that some day, *inshallah*, I shall see again.

THE END

A MAP OF PALESTINE



CHRONOLOGICAL TABLE

B. C.

4 Death of Herod the Great.

A. D.

- 29 The Crucifixion.
- 70 Destruction of Jerusalem by Titus.
- 100? Death of Josephus, the Jewish historian.
- 326 St. Helena visits the Holy Land.
- 386 St. Jerome takes up his residence in Bethlehem.
- 527 Accession of Justinian I, builder of *El-Aksa*.
- 616 Jerusalem captured by the Persian Chosroes II.
- 622 Mohammed's flight (Hegira) from Mecca; the Moslem year *one*.
- 636 The Moslems under Omar conquer Palestine.
- 693 Completion of the Mosque of Omar.
- 1099 The First Crusade captures Jerusalem.
- 1187 Saladin defeats the Crusaders at Hattîn.
- 1189 The Third Crusade. Richard Coeur de Lion in Palestine.
- 1291 Christian rule in Palestine finally overthrown.
- 1453 Constantinople taken by Mohammed II.
- 1517 Palestine made part of the Turkish Empire.
- 1799 Napoleon Bonaparte invades Galilee.
- 1832 Palestine ceded to Egypt.
- 1840 Palestine re-conquered by the Turks.
- 1862 Visit of the Prince of Wales to Hebron.
- 1898 William II of Germany dedicates the German Church in Jerusalem.
- 1909 Overthrow of Abdul Hamid II and the beginning of constitutional government in Turkey.

THE BEST BOOKS ON PALESTINE

George Adam Smith's *Historical Geography of the Holy Land* (London, 1902; pp. xxiii + 713) is somewhat limited in its scope, as indicated by the title, but is nevertheless the best single book on Palestine. It has a number of excellent maps.

William M. Thompson's *The Land and the Book* (New York, 1880; 3 vols.) is the most exhaustive work on Bible manners and customs, as illustrated by the life of modern Palestine.

For the general reader, these two books are worth more than all others put together.

Baedeker's *Palestine and Syria* (Leipsic, frequently revised; pp. cxviii + 472) was compiled by Prof. Albert Socin, a noted Orientalist, and besides very good sectional maps and the usual matter of a guide-book, it contains a long introduction dealing with the history, religions, races, climate, etc., of Palestine.

Edward Robinson's *Biblical Researches in Palestine* (Boston, 1868; 3 vols.) is the most scholarly work ever written on the subject, and is still considered a first-rate authority on most points, but it is now out of print. The person who can pick up a set at a second-hand book store may consider himself fortunate.

Dean Stanley's *Sinai and Palestine* is another excellent work which is out of print, but which may be found at most libraries.

The best maps are those published by the Palestine Exploration Fund of London.

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